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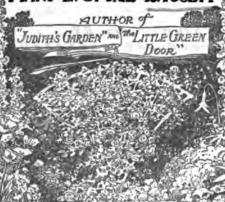
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I don't see how one can be without a garden and morning glories

AMIDSUMMER WOOING

BY MARY E. STONE BASSETT



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Published, April, 1913



Norwood Press
Berwick & Smith Co.
Norwood, Mass., U.S.A.

"A garden is a beautiful book writ by the finger of God: Every flower and every leaf is a letter."

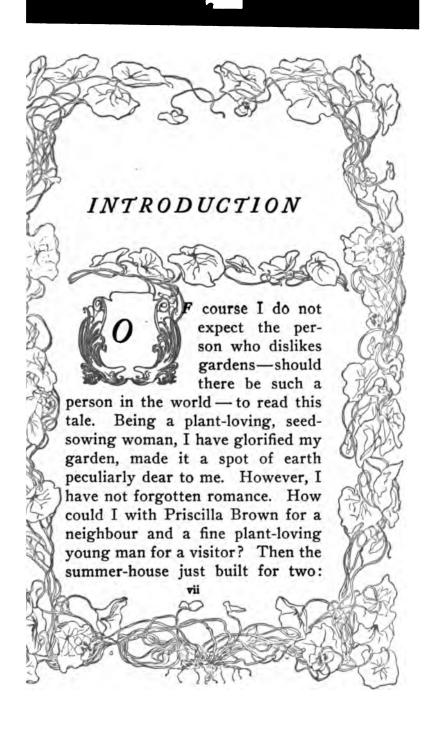


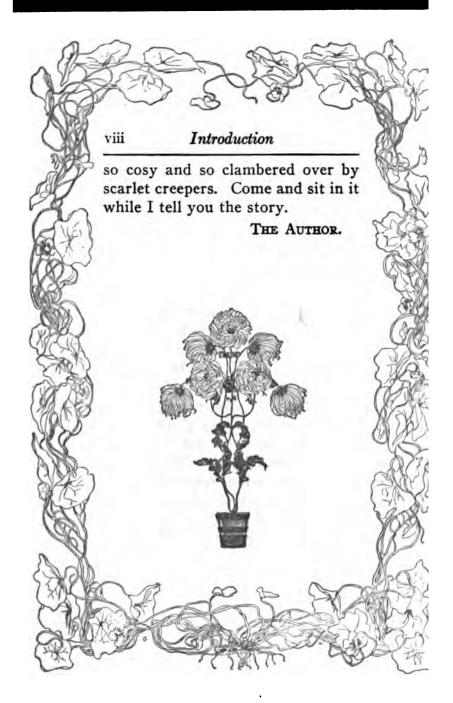
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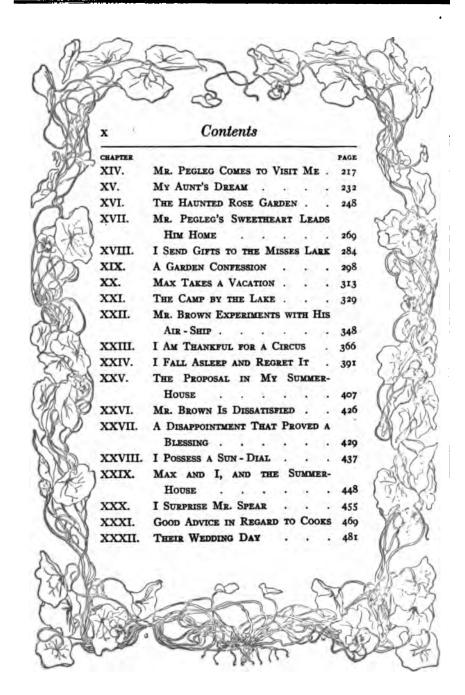
Who is a brother to the sun — Who drinks the wine that morning spills Upon the heaven-kissing hills, And sees a ray of hope afar In every glimmer of a star?"





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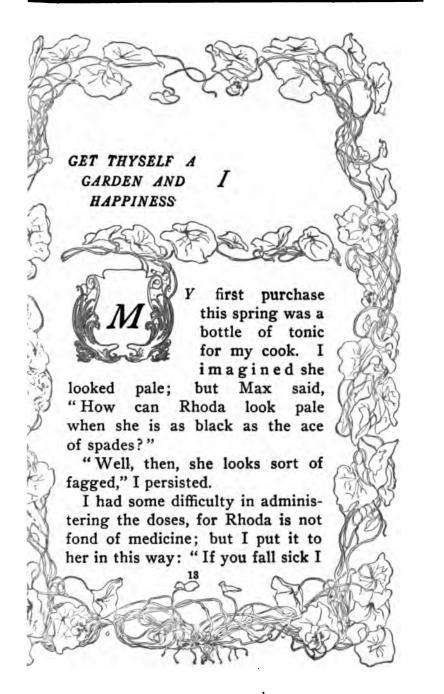


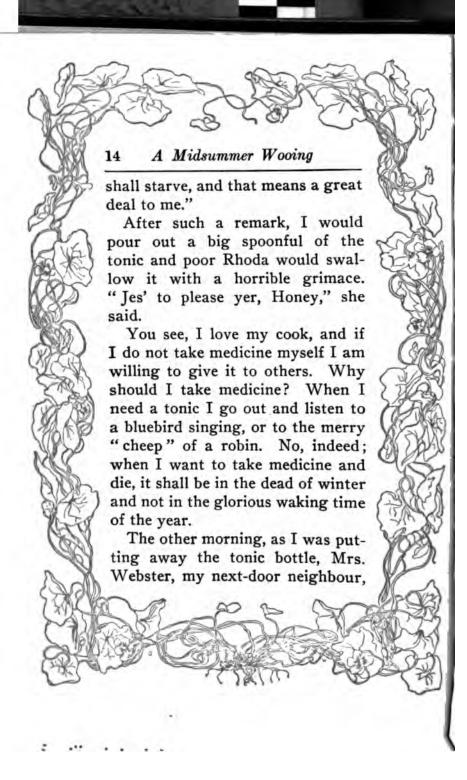
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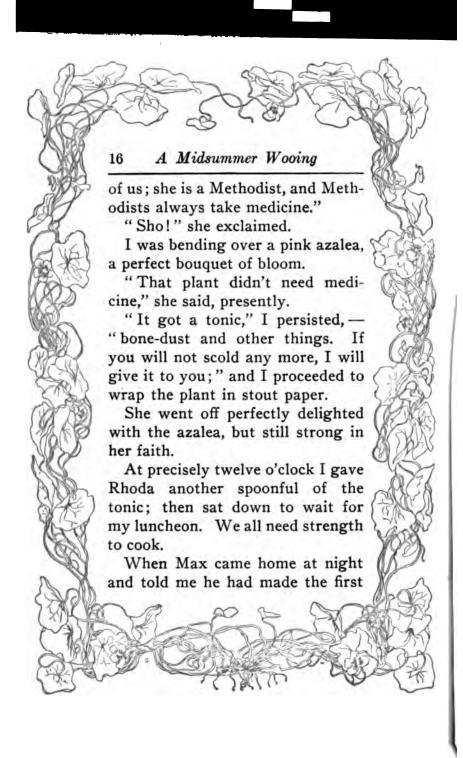
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dropped in upon me. I love her, although she is a Christian Scientist and I am a gardener. She is the merriest soul alive; but to-day she took me to task for dosing Rhoda. She followed me into the greenhouse, lecturing all the time. I kept right on watering plants and searching for stray bugs. When she had apparently exhausted herself, I said:

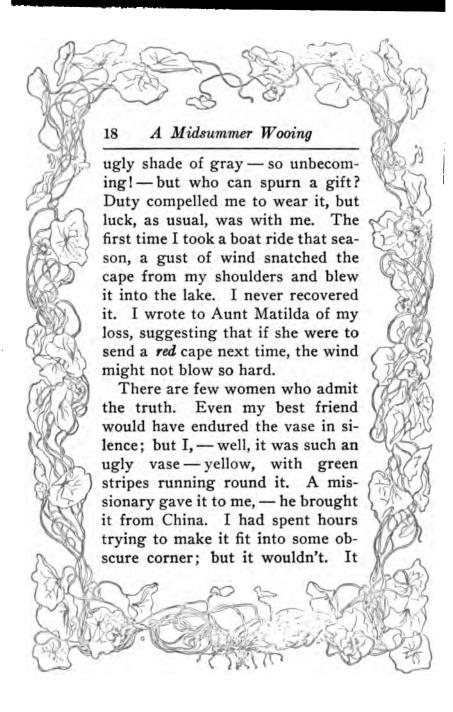
"I don't take medicine, because I am one of Nature's children, and my old mother isn't fond of sick things. She wants her trees, her plants, and her animals to be strong and sleek, so I heed well her wise counsels. You don't take medicine, because you say you have discovered a higher law that, when obeyed, makes you strong and happy; but Rhoda is like neither

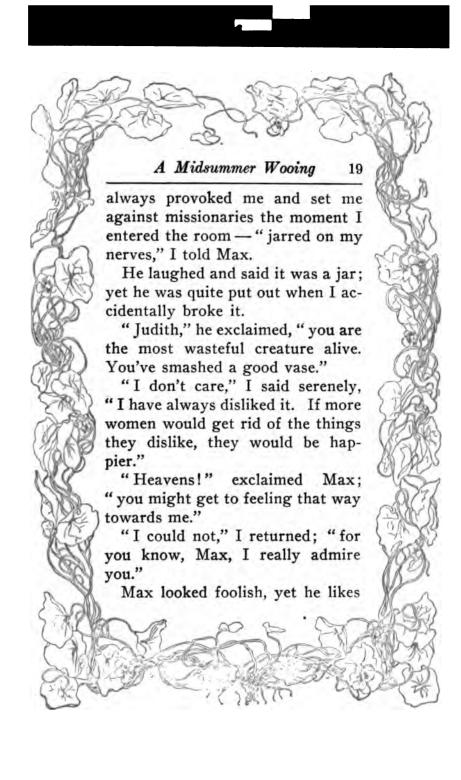


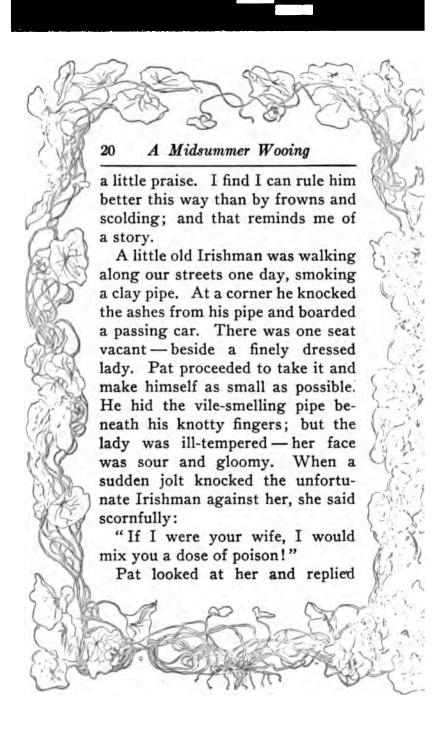
payment on Tom Norton's place, and now it was really ours — for Mr. Norton couldn't possibly back out — I was so vaingloriously happy that I knocked over a vase I dislike, and broke it.

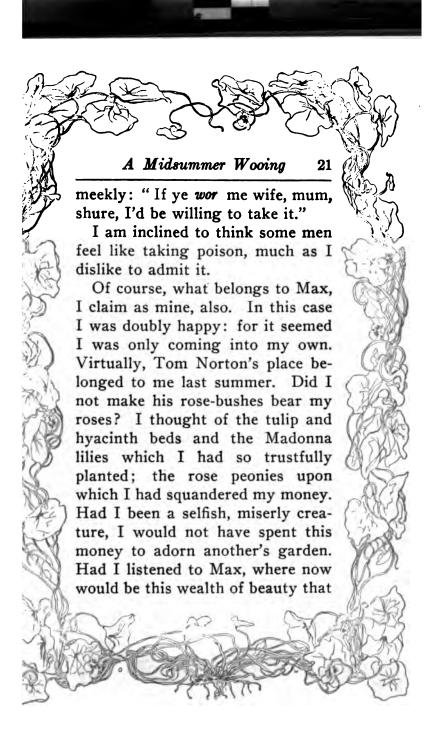
I really didn't mean to break that vase, it just happened so: yet I have always been very fortunate in getting rid of things I dislike. I remember once having a bonnet I hated. It cost me so much that I felt obliged to wear it; but one night I forgot and left it on a bench in the garden. A fearful storm arose, and next morning, when I went to look for my bonnet, why, you wouldn't have known it was a bonnet. I bore that loss with great resignation.

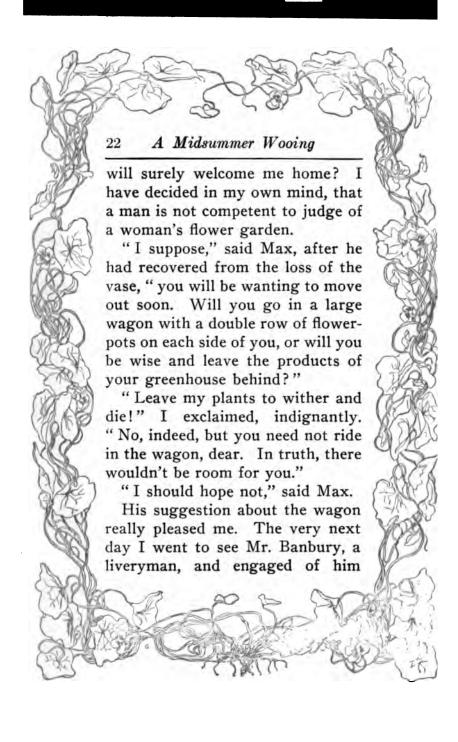
Again, I owned a cape (a gift from my Aunt Matilda). It was an

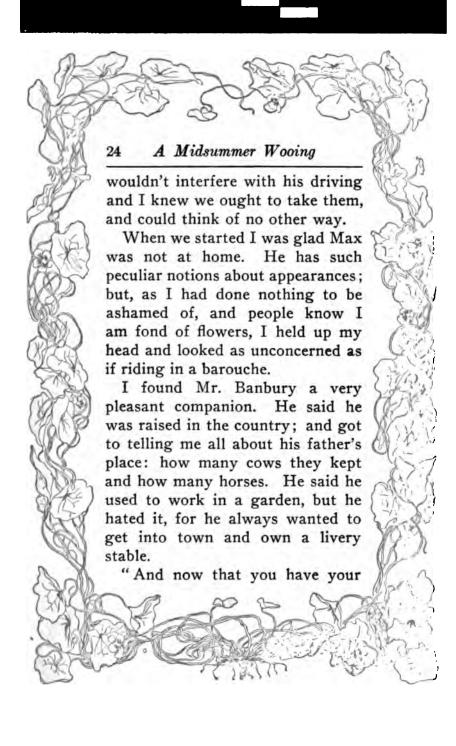


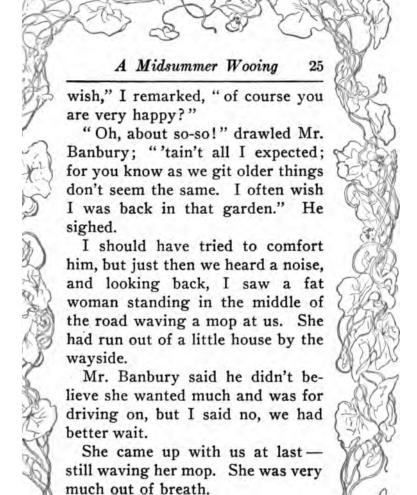


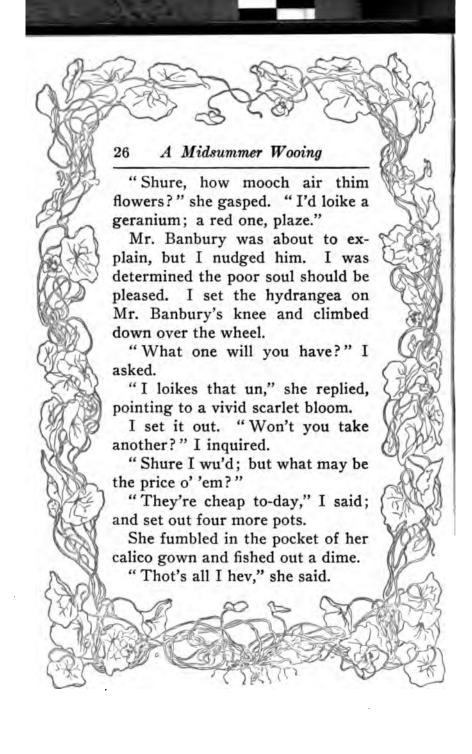












"Is it?" I replied, waving back the money. "Well, take them all and pay me some other time."

She went off carrying the precious geraniums, and we drove on: but presently I looked back and saw that she had forgotten her mop. It was lying in the middle of the road.

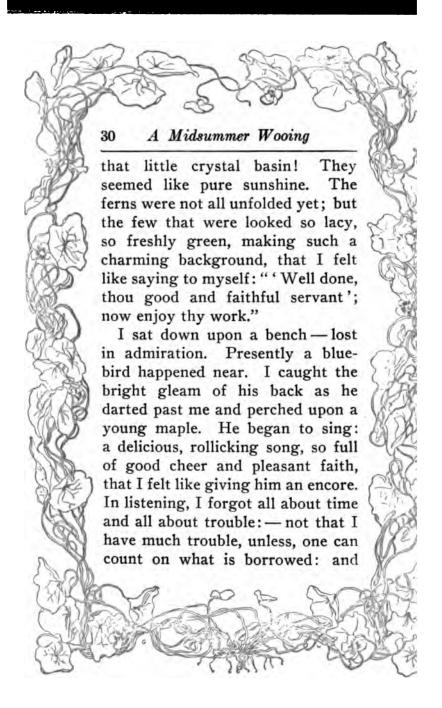
Mr. Banbury said she couldn't carry it on account of the geraniums and would come back for it; but I thought differently. "It is a good mop," I said, "and it might get run over. I shall carry it back to her," and in spite of his saying that the horses wouldn't stand, I set down my hydrangea again and crawled out over the wheel.

I was gone longer than I expected, for Mrs. Sullivan needed me to tell her just how to set out those geraniums, and then I gave her "I'm plazed to see ye, mum," he replied.

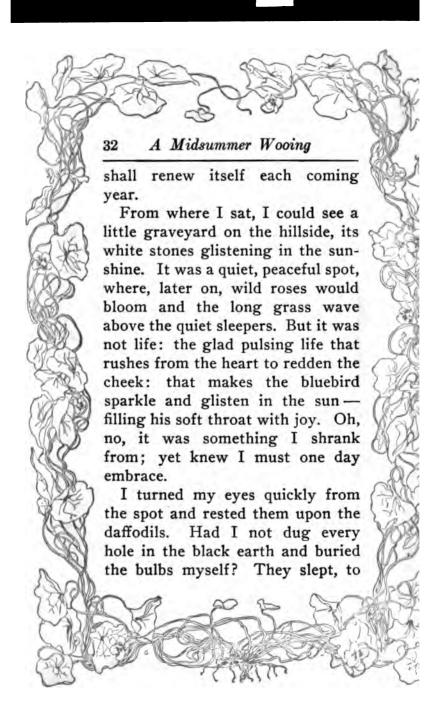
I handed him the hydrangea, then allowed him to help me down. Together, we fell to work unloading Mr. Banbury's wagon; and that person drove off — not ill pleased, I thought.

Here was a whole day in the country with no one to bother me. This sounds rather heartless; but you know there are times when one likes to be alone.

After telling Pat where to put our precious plants, in the house and about the piazza, I ran down the garden path to the spring. Sure enough, the daffodils I had planted were in bloom, waving their silken yellow petals in the brisk wind. Who could wish a lovelier sight than these beauties huddling about



why, I ask, should I borrow what I do not want and little need? If all women would remember this, they would enjoy themselves better. I could not help thinking as I sat there that life is a good thing, no matter how much some people decry it. I determined to live as long as possible, and the only thing that worried me was the leaving of life. I half wished I had helped to make the world, for I should have been just as kind to man as God is to nature. That probably old tree yonder, was it not putting forth a perfect miracle of fresh foliage literally renewing itself? Why, then, should not a bald-headed man have a new growth of hair? This growing old, who likes it? Not I. The more I look into nature, the younger I feel. My spirit, at least,

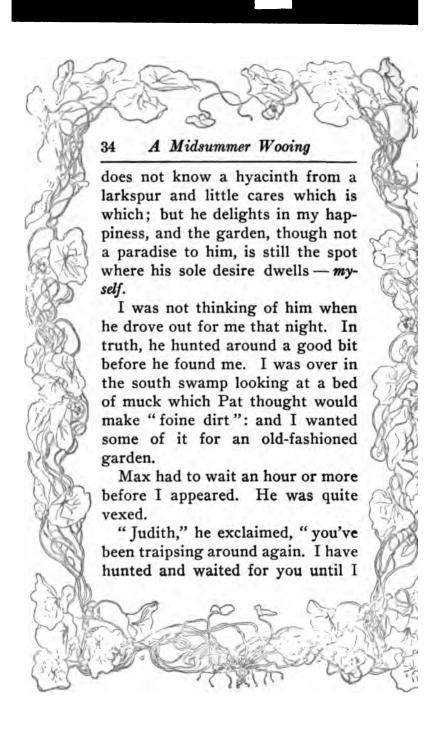


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arise in beauty. Perhaps, I thought, so is death; we shall arise clothed in beauty. I did not pick one of the flowers, because they looked so glad to be living.

Now put yourself in my place this gay spring morning. Supposing that there was nothing in the world that you so delighted in as a garden? That you dreamed of a garden and talked of a garden, until it was your one hobby to mount and ride upon all occasions. Then, supposing a fairy prince should give you a great garden, to do with just as you pleased? I imagine you would feel rather "set up," as the English have it.

Now Max is my fairy prince, and Tom Norton's garden is mine. I can do as I like in it; dig and plant to my heart's content. Poor Max



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have lost all patience. Where have you been?"

"Why, over in the south swamp, dear; and, Max, I saw a phoebe. The black-headed darling was in the lowest branch of a big basswood

— calling in the sweetest way. I hunted around for his mate, but I imagine she has not yet come north; then I discovered a whole colony of

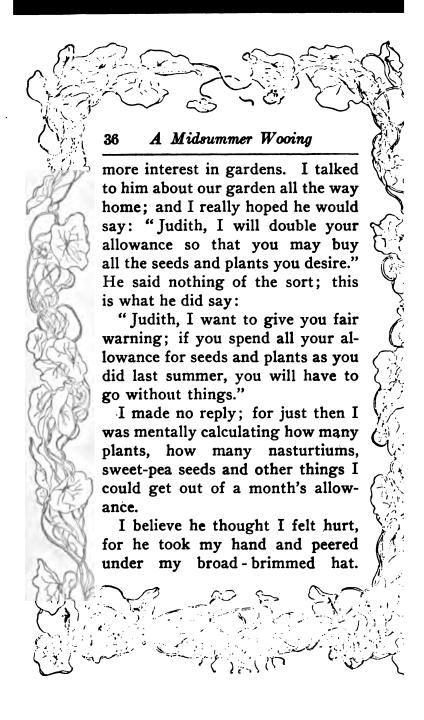
hepaticas, as blue as heaven! and after that, — the sunset was incomparable."

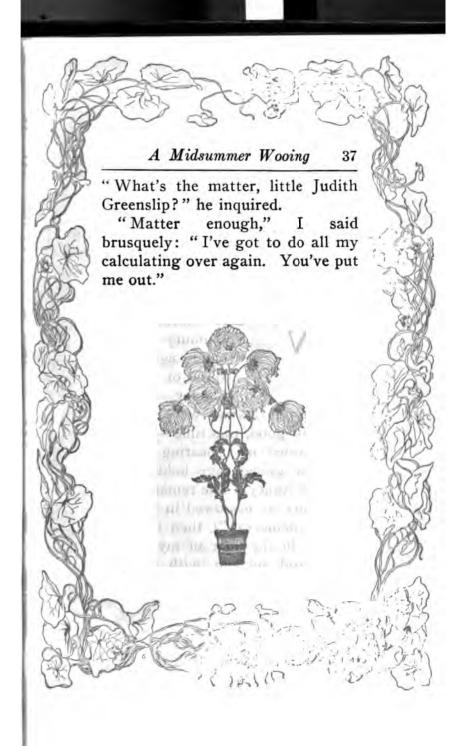
"And you watched it as long as you dared?" said Max.

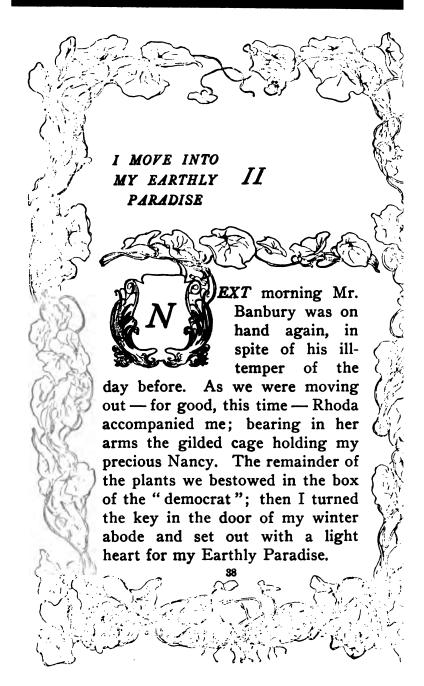
"Just as long as I dared, dear," I replied, "but now I am ready to go home."

"I should hope so," he said, dryly.

I love my husband, but I wish, oh, how I wish he did take a little

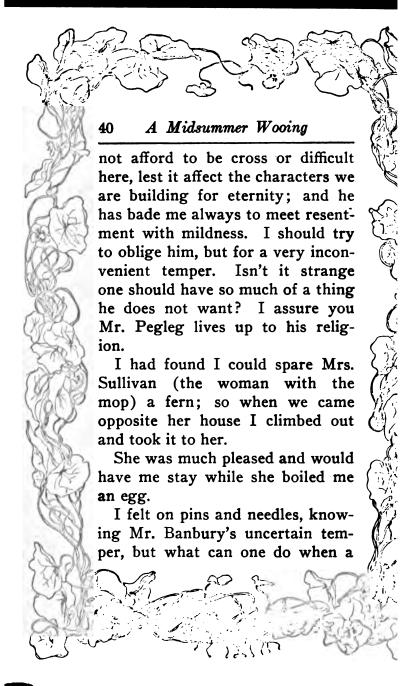






Mr. Pegleg — my esteemed friend — came to bid me good-by. The poor old man looked sad, but brightened when I told him he must surely visit me for a whole month. I left him in charge of a large begonia, as I knew it would please him to think he was doing something for me.

Mr. Pegleg's body is long past eighty, but his spirit remains young and delightfully attractive. His religion astonishes me. He believes that the stars are other worlds in which spirits dwell. He also thinks our good things here will continue right on in the next life: say, if one loves a garden on this planet, why, a garden over there. I cling to this idea; for I would so much rather bear a trowel than a harp. He declares we can-



A Midsummer Wooing

1

nice Irishwoman is bent on showing you a courtesy?

She said she would run to the barn and get the egg from under a hen.

I told her "No, no!" but she said
"Yis, yis!" so I had to wait.

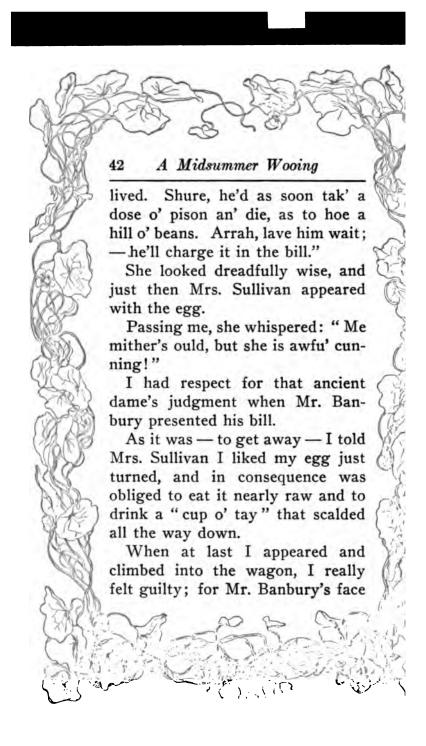
In the room was a very old woman in a white cap that frilled out from her face like a large sunflower. She was peacefully smoking a pipe.

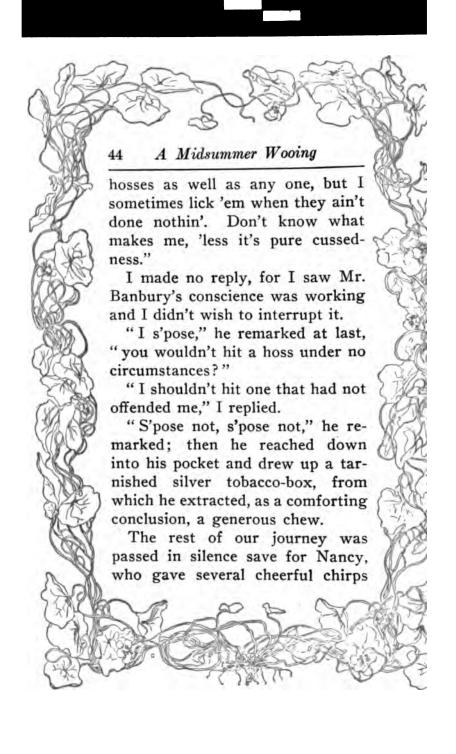
"Pwhat's yer hurry?" she inquired.

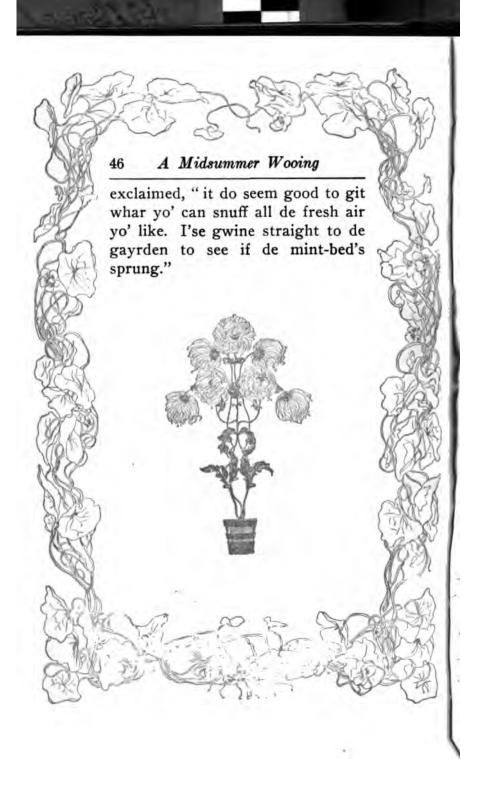
"Mr. Banbury is waiting," I explained.

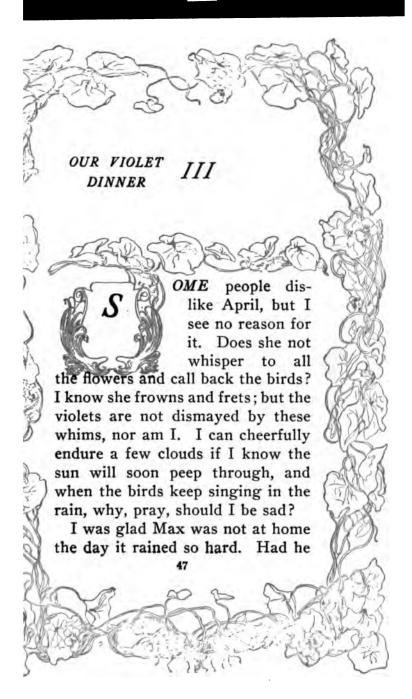
"Is it Ben Banbury ye mane, pwhat kapes a livery? Arrah, lave him wait! Shure, 'tis better plazed

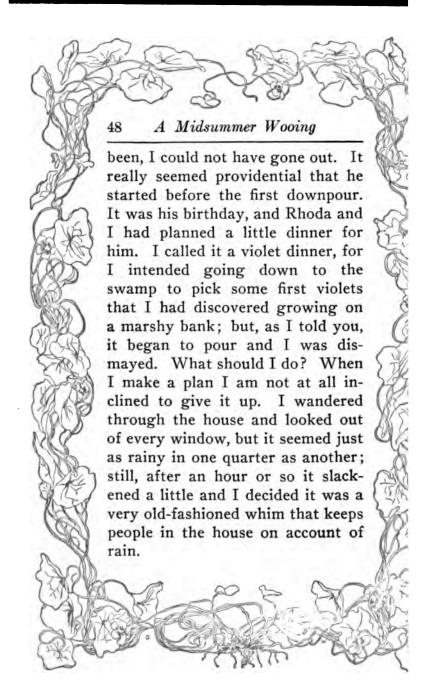
he'll be a-settin' than a-joggin'.
Didn't I work for his faither's fambly years agone! A lazier b'y never







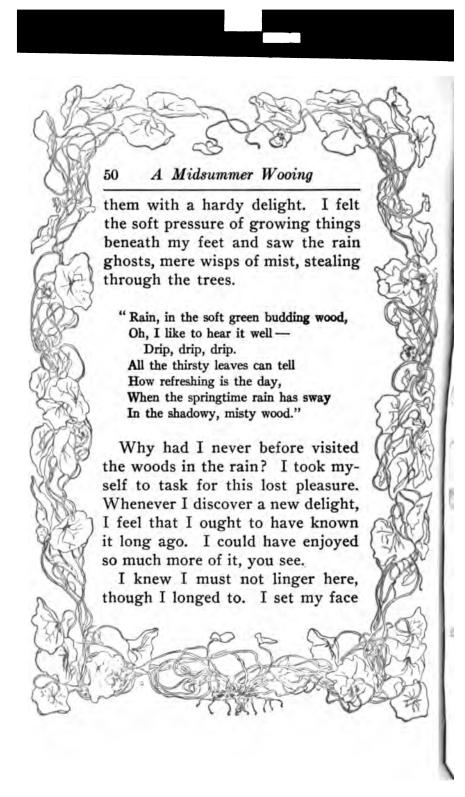




I told Rhoda I was going up to my room, for I well know her horror of wet weather; and there I did go and read a book for a straight half-hour, just to convince my unpleasant Conscience that I was not telling a lie.

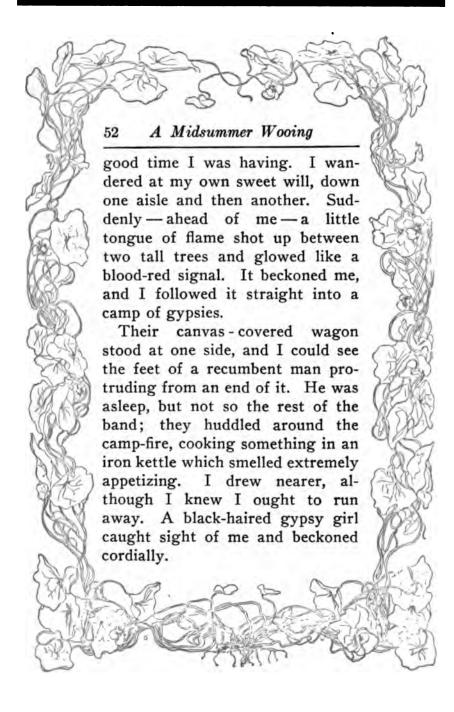
After I had the creature fairly subdued, I slipped into my waterproof and galoshes and hurried down the front stairs.

I fairly flew through the garden path, across the foot-bridge and into the grove. Here, I felt sure, Rhoda could not see me and run after me with an umbrella; so I paused a spell, for the long dim aisles enchanted me. Drip, drip, fell the rain down through the slight green leaves, and drip, drip, upon the unfolding ferns. What sweet scents were abroad! I sniffed



resolutely toward an opening. promising my reluctant spirit, that the very next rainy day I would come out early and stay late. Soon I was trailing through a meadow path. I crossed several fields and came at length to a lane bordered on the left by a wood, which leads to the south swamp. I said to my-"It is no farther to go self: through the woods than by the lane; why not take the woods? Those dim entrances look so deliciously misty - as if something more than usual lay beyond them: I think I will explore." I climbed the fence and crossed a roaring brook on a tottering log; dropped one of my galoshes in a mud-pat; recovered it, and was soon lost in the budding forest.

Here I forgot everything but the

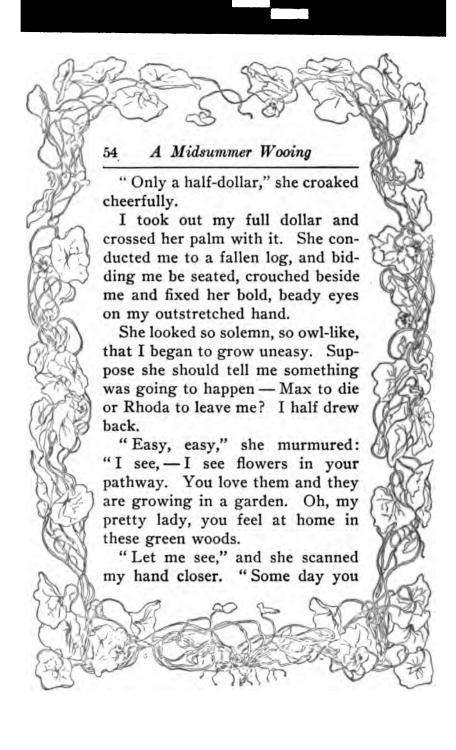


"Come, pretty lady, and have your fortune told," croaked an elderly witch who was tending the kettle.

Now who does not long to lift the veil to the future — that mysterious, swaying, impenetrable veil which hides from us all the delightful things — or maybe, the sorrowful things — of life? I am but human. I felt in the steel purse which hung by a chatelaine to my belt, and clasped in my fingers a silver dollar. It was all I happened to have with me, and I had already mentally disposed of it in the line of garden seeds; but —

"Tell your fortune, pretty lady?" The witch wiped her hands on a tatter which hung from a bush and drew near me.

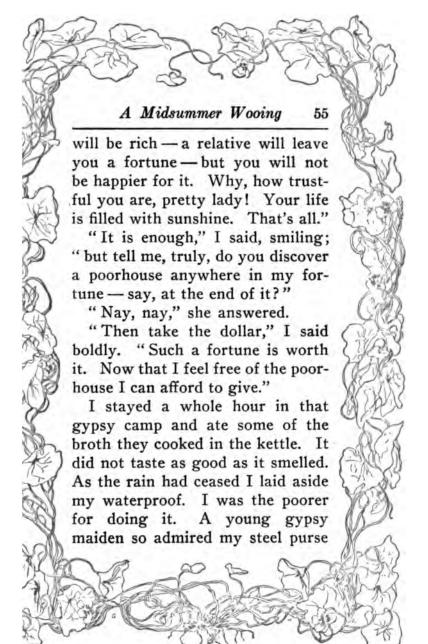
"How much?" I inquired.

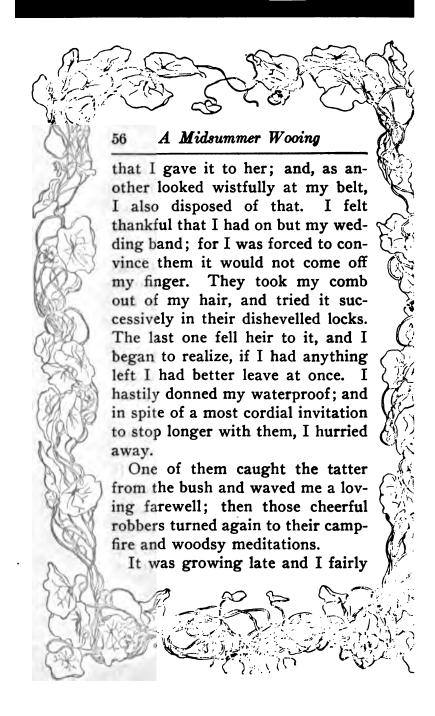


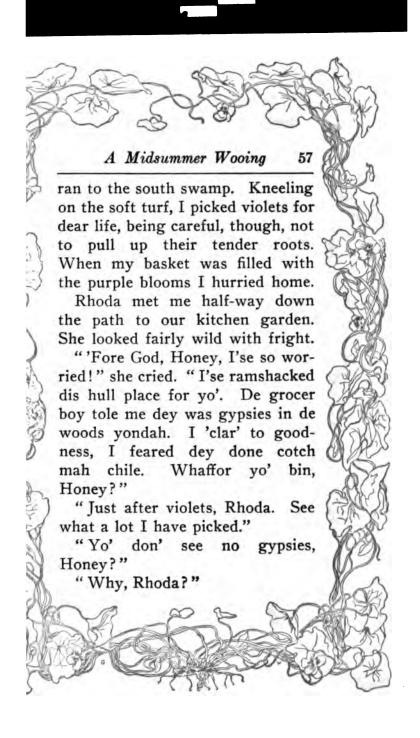


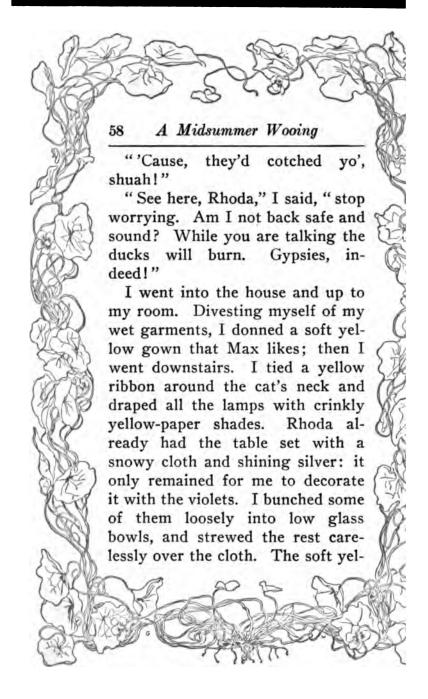
**I see — I see flowers in your pathway"

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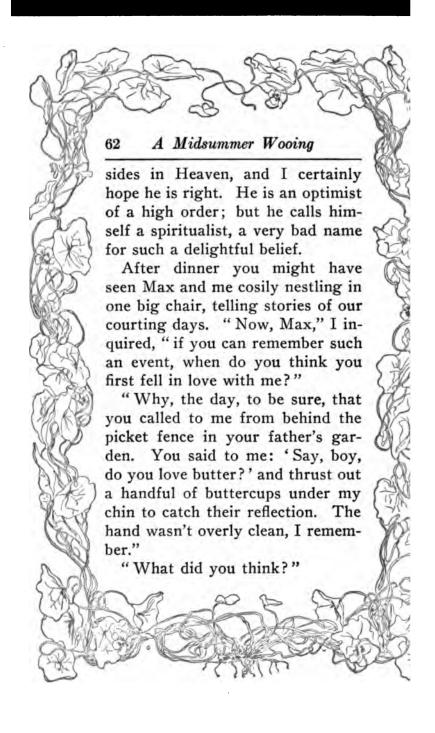


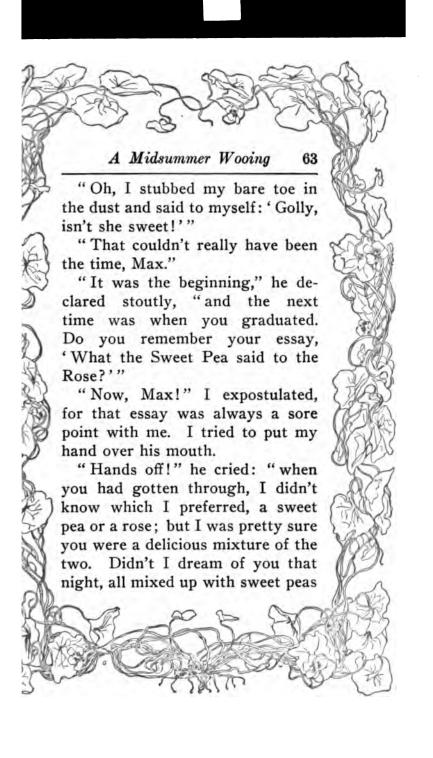


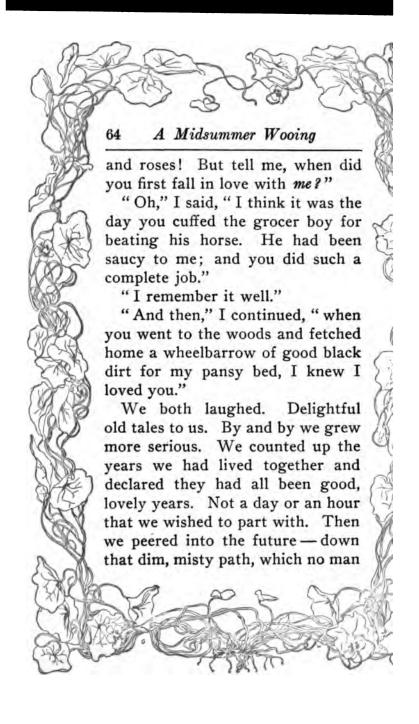
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selrode pudding — made after her old missus's "recipy" in the South, so Rhoda claims; and, surely, it is famously good. The cake, bearing on its frosting the date of Max's birth; the long tray of lighted candles — I shall not tell how many — sat beside it; and lastly the coffee, clear as amber, and a tiny mould of cheese on a dainty plate beside a fat cracker. All so good that it made one a little lonesome to think of Heaven, where they do not eat at all.

I know of nothing more heartening in this world than a good dinner and a cheerful fire — with the one you love best beside you. It is then you feel at peace with all the world — and least in love with Heaven. My friend, Mr. Pegleg, believes that there are private fire-







knoweth — but our trust was in the good Father who surely gave us the birthright of happiness.

Before I slept that night, I sought the kitchen. Beside the snowy pine table sat Rhoda knitting. I love her, love her if she is black as ebony; and I said to her:

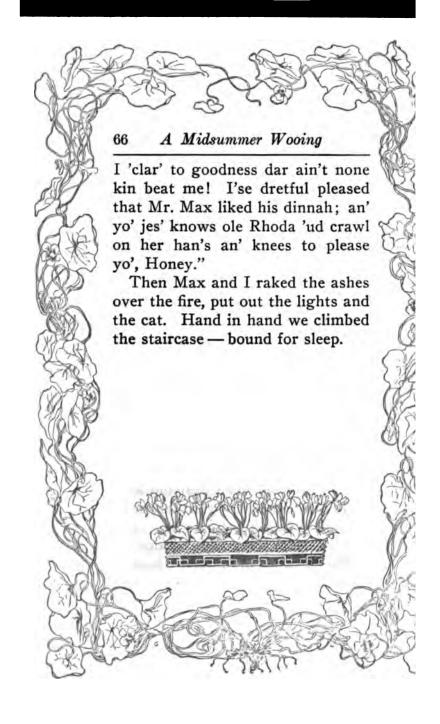
"Rhoda, I have come to thank you for the pleasure you have given us. The dinner was worthy of you. Every day of your life you add to

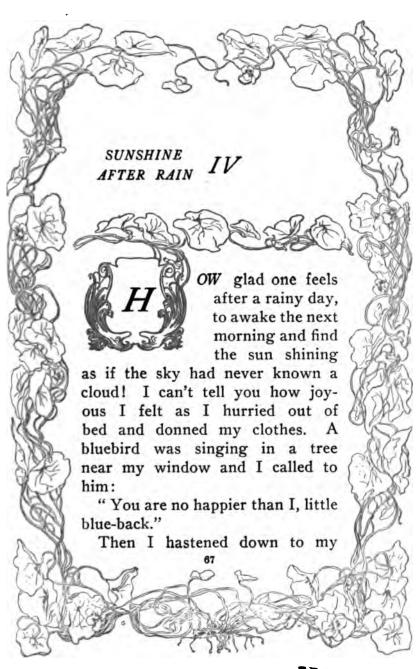
our happiness. Now, good night:

may your dreams be pleasant — your sleep sweet."

She looked at me with the love in her eyes that I imagined she used to give her dead husband and the lost pickaninnies; yet there was triumph in her mien:

"I'se learnt dat cookin' in one of de fust famblies in de Souf, Honey.



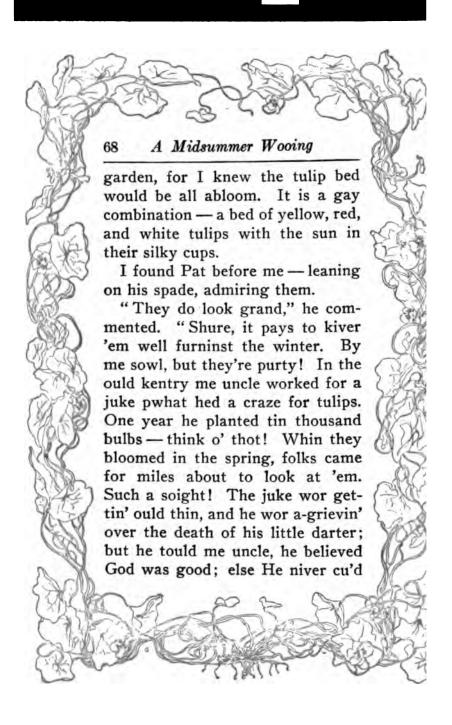


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tulip."

"I know He is good, don't you,

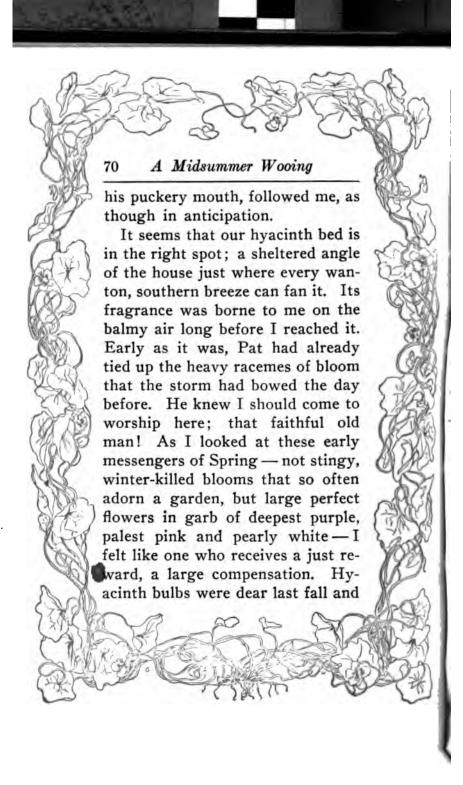
Pat?"
"Shure I thinks so, mum, whin

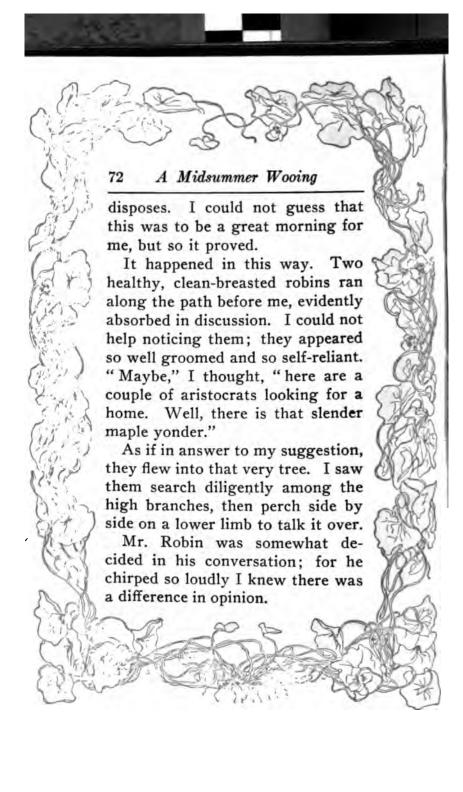
I sees all the flowers a-bloomin' and the birds springin' about joyous loike and the sky so blue; but whin I thinks of purgatory and hell beyant—shure, I dunno, I dunno."

"Don't think about them, Pat. Come, this is our garden—a spot in the green earth to enjoy. There may be such places as you speak of, but I shall take good care not to inhabit them. See that path yonder? It leads to Arcady, or in other words, to the hyacinth bed.

I ran gayly down the path, and Pat, with that queer little grin about

Come, tread it with me!"



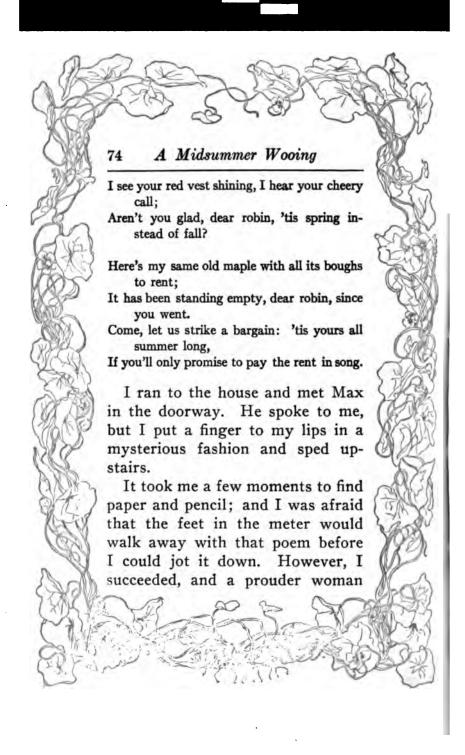


His wife listened to him with seeming deference; but at the end, took up the conversation, in a lower tone, to be sure, but with true fempersistence. Her spouse shook his head and flapped his wings in derision; but I am happy to say she held on, and I do believe in the end had her own way; for she flew to the top of the tree he following. Presently I saw them both start forth in search of building material. Then an inspiration seized me.

Then an inspiration seized me. It was my first attempt at poetry, but what of that? Is there not always a first time? I really composed the following lines:

Ho! robin redbreast, I've been looking out for you; I have it marked, my birdie, the day that

I have it marked, my birdie, the day that you are due;



never seated herself at a breakfast table.

I could scarcely eat for thinking of my high estate. A poet has always seemed to me an individual who resides in a steeple. I was really afraid Max would not inquire into the matter, so I hinted about some. I asked him if he believed poets were born so, or acquired the art.

"Born so," he said.

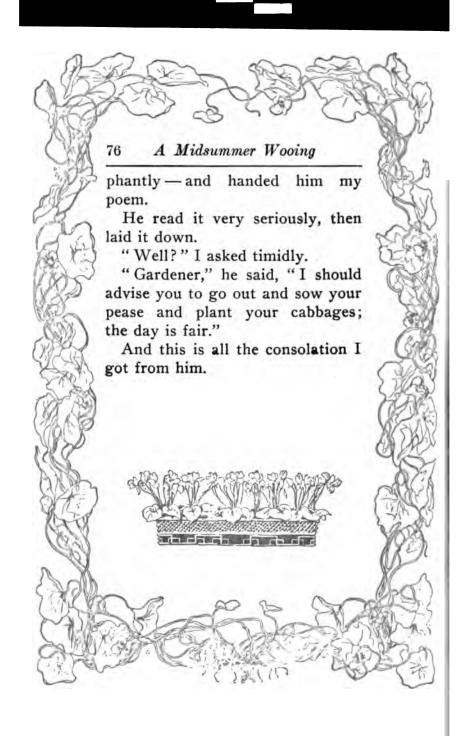
"Could any one suddenly develop into a poet?" I inquired.

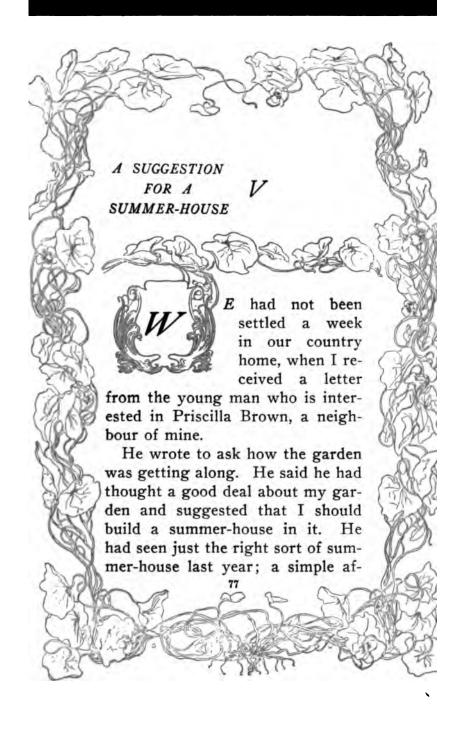
"Well, hardly," he replied.

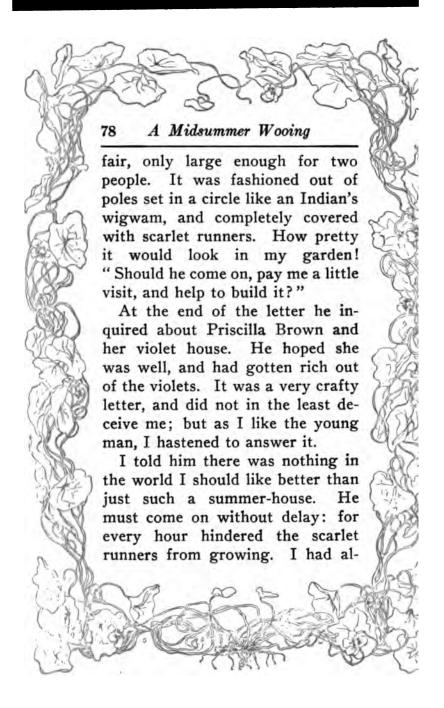
Then I asked him what he would do, should he discover a poet in his family?

He looked a little suspicious and said dryly, "I hope it will never come to that."

"But it has," I cried trium-



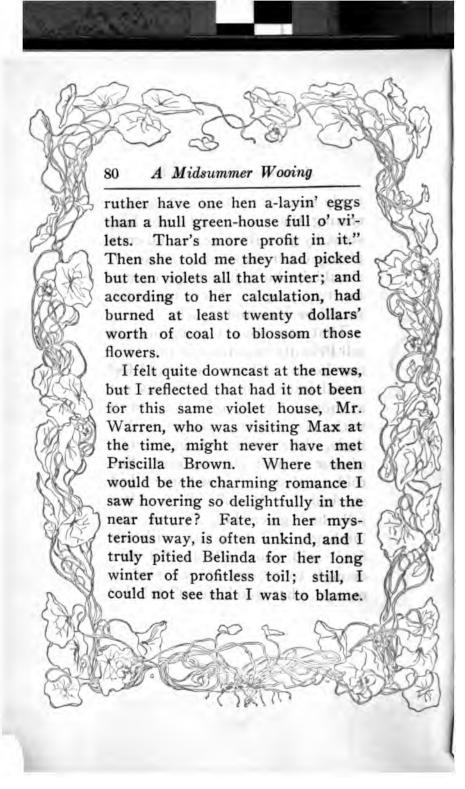


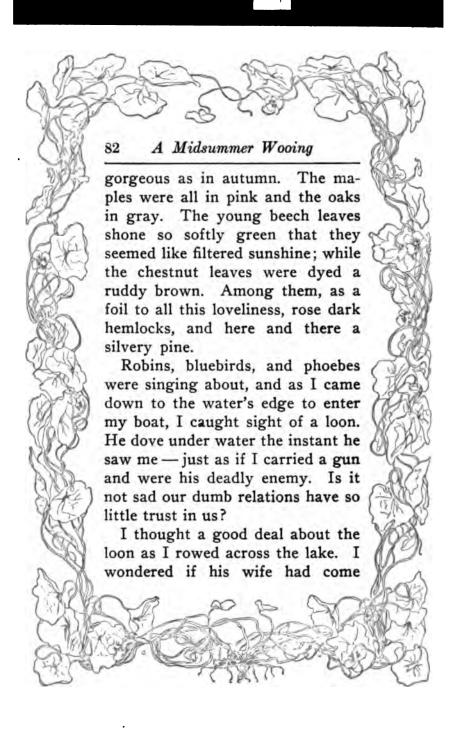


ready sent for the seed and Pat was cutting the poles. If he got here soon, by July the vines would completely cover the summer-house. It should be built just large enough for two people. They, no doubt, would be Max and myself.

That afternoon I went over to tell Priscilla Brown about this summer-house. I knew she would feel a real interest in it. She was not at home, having driven to town with her father. However, Belinda, their hired girl, had a tale of woe to pour into my ears. She told me that the violet house I had stocked for Priscilla Brown last fall, had given her, Belinda, the lumbago. "Taking that with my fits," said poor Belinda, "it was enough to set me crazy. God o'

mercy, what good air vi'lets! I'd

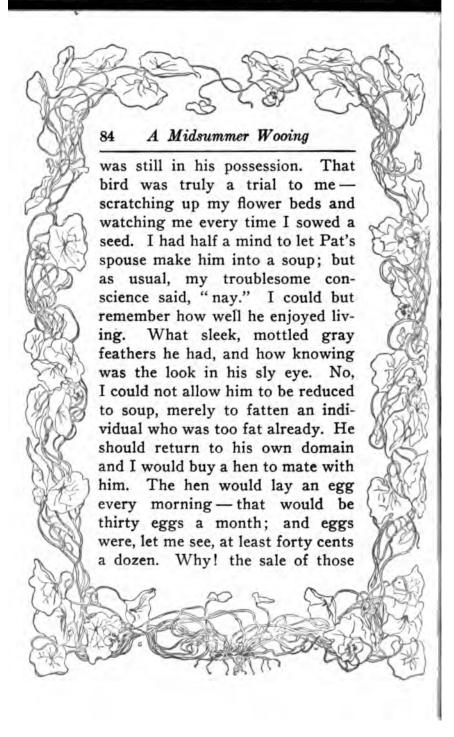




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north yet. It seems that the male and female loons do not travel to-He must come first and follow. Birds have some strange notions. The bluebirds and the phoebes do the same thing leave their wives behind and arrive north several days earlier. knows but somewhere on the route the males hold a great convention from which the females are debarred? When one gets to reading about birds and observing them, he finds they have their little idiosyncrasies just the same as the human family.

Thinking about birds, reminded me of a species of my own — Tom Norton's rooster. Pat had taken him home last fall in a basket for the winter. He had also taken the cat and returned her, but the rooster



eggs would more than pay for the seeds they could both scratch up and leave me a tidy little surplus besides. I should be making money. The sooner that rooster returned and I bought a hen, the better for me. The woman to whom I gave the geraniums kept

By the time I had decided this weighty question, I was at home. Rhoda met me at the door. I could see she was excited, for her turban was awry. In one hand she held

fowls; I decided that I would buy

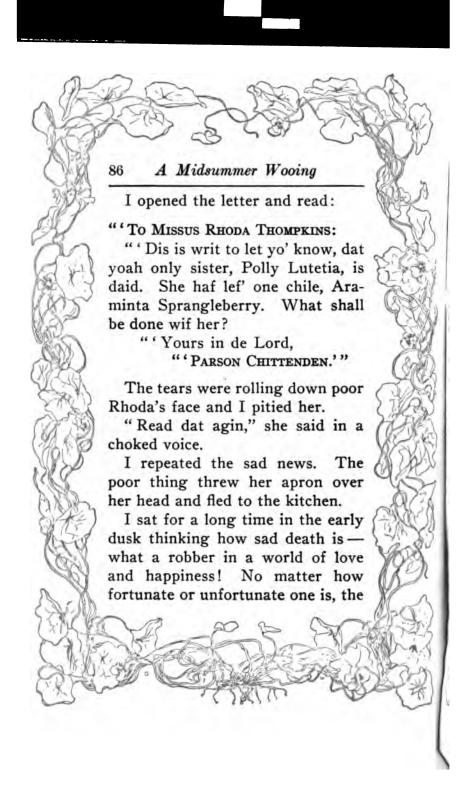
a letter.

"De postman lef' dis, Honey," she said. "He say it war directed to me."

"So it is, Rhoda; shall I read it to you?"

"Yes'm, Honey."

one of her.



end is always the same. Then I thought of a little story Mr. Pegleg had told me.

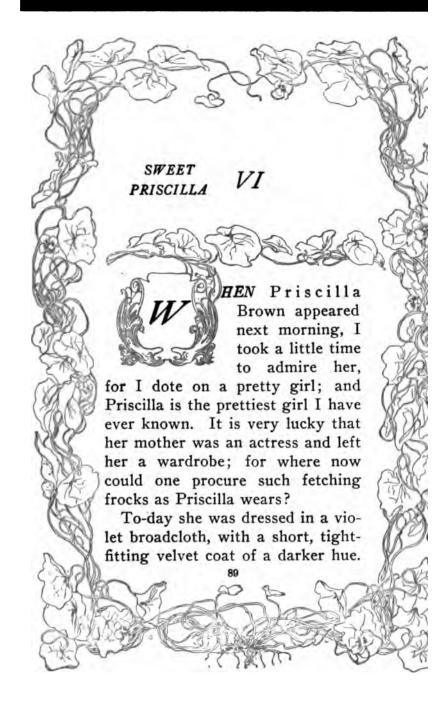
He said: "When people die their spirits do not go far away. There is a place called the border-land where they wait for their earth-friends to come over. It is a beautiful place; and there are many camp-fires there. We all have some loved one waiting. When we come to die, these spirits return to earth, they hover around the bedside and cheer the departing one; and this is the reason so few people are afraid to die; they see friends beside them."

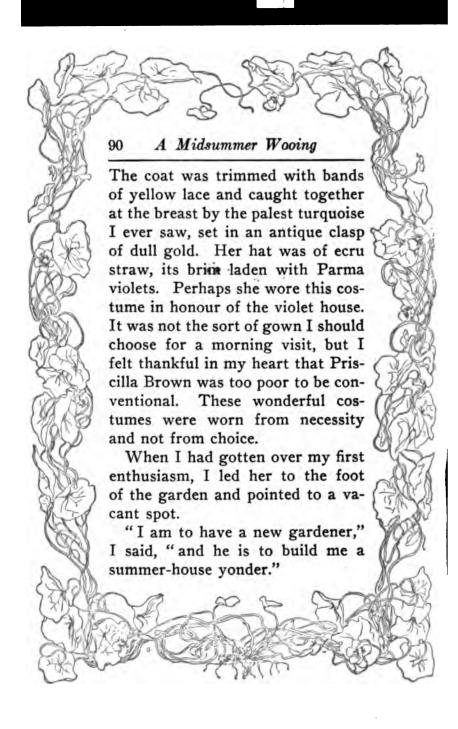
A comforting belief and worthy of Mr. Pegleg.

I told this little story to Rhoda, but she said:

"Sho, missus, dat's too good to







A Midsummer Wooing

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"Has Pat left you?" she inquired, innocently.

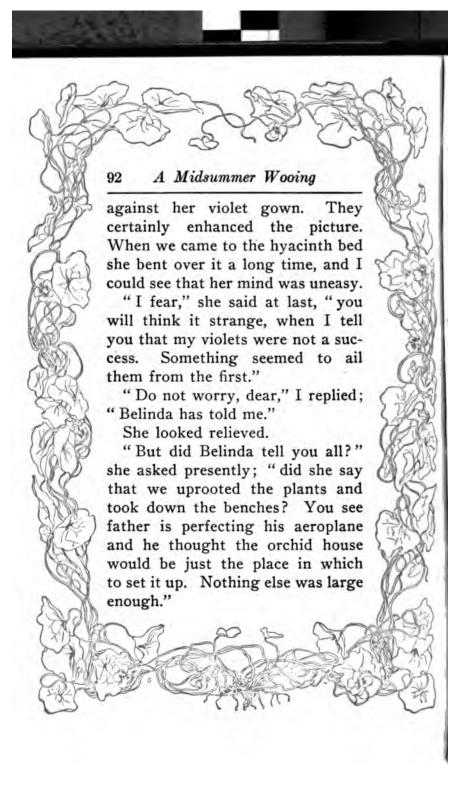
"No, indeed; but my new gardener is a self-installed one. He has asked the privilege of building this summer-house—just large enough to hold two people. I am to help him, and you are to come over and look on, to see that it is all right."

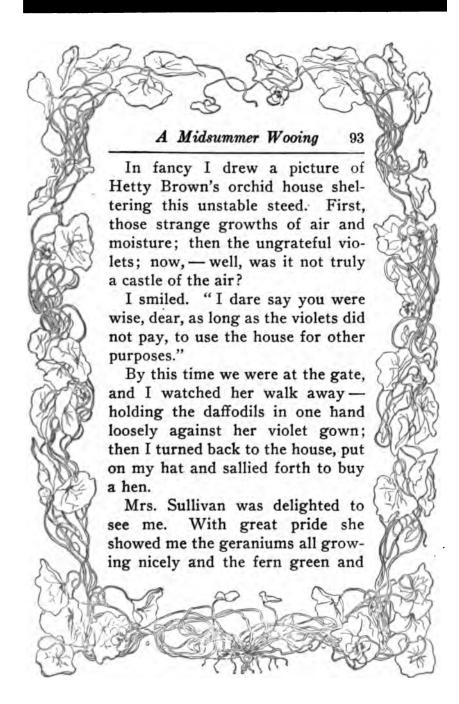
She began to blush, and I knew that the truth was out.

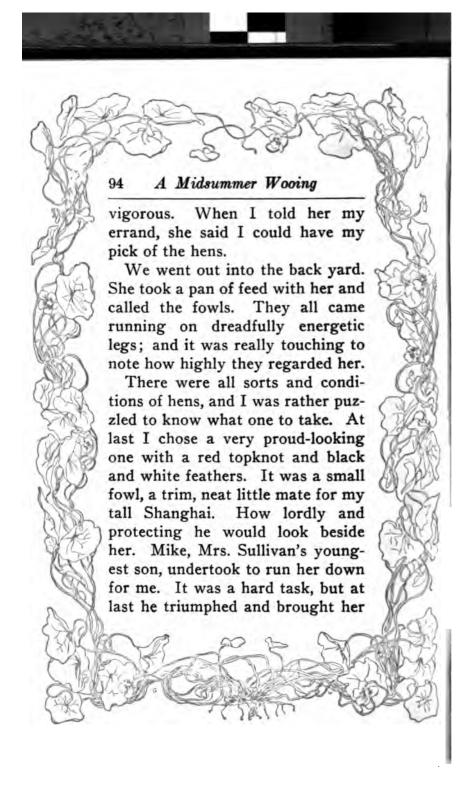
I gave her a little hug and dropped the subject; for, in love affairs, one cannot be too cautious. A match-maker had best look out.

We walked all through the garden and Priscilla was delighted

with my daffodils and the tulip bed. She said she had never seen a gayer sight. I picked her a bunch of daffodils, for I had a fancy to see them





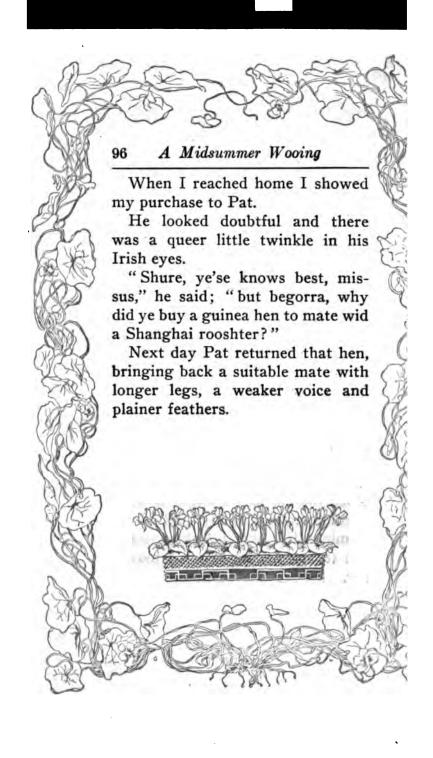


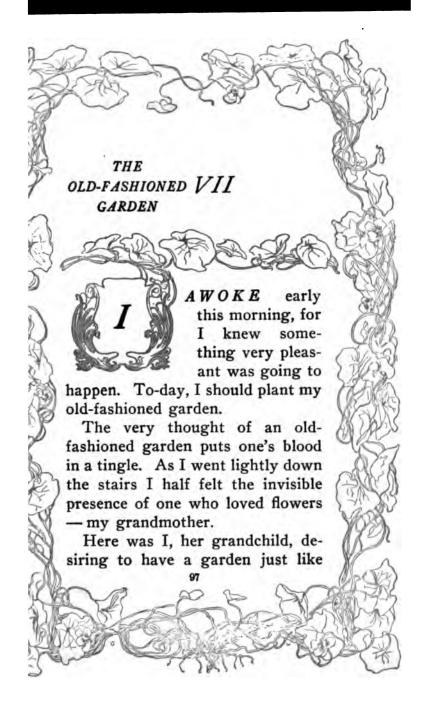
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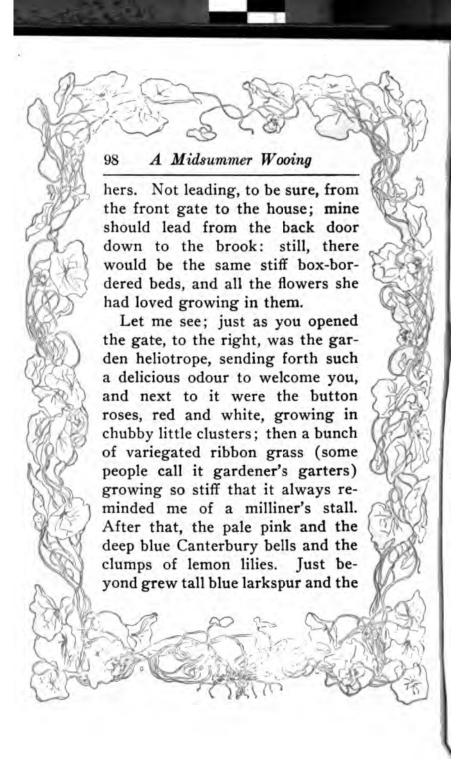
to me by her two legs — she squawking vigorously.

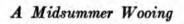
I promised the lad some money if he would carry her home for me, and pressing upon Mrs. Sullivan a dollar for my purchase, we set out. It did seem as if that hen had an

unusual voice—so loud and strident. I began to fear that if she did not cease squawking she would be afflicted with bronchitis. She kept it up all the way home and everybody we met smiled; while a horse driven by an old lady shied and nearly ran away with her. I could not help reflecting, afterward, that if the horse had run away and killed the old lady I might now be uncomfortably lodged in jail. I determined if I ever bought another hen to box her up before I moved her.





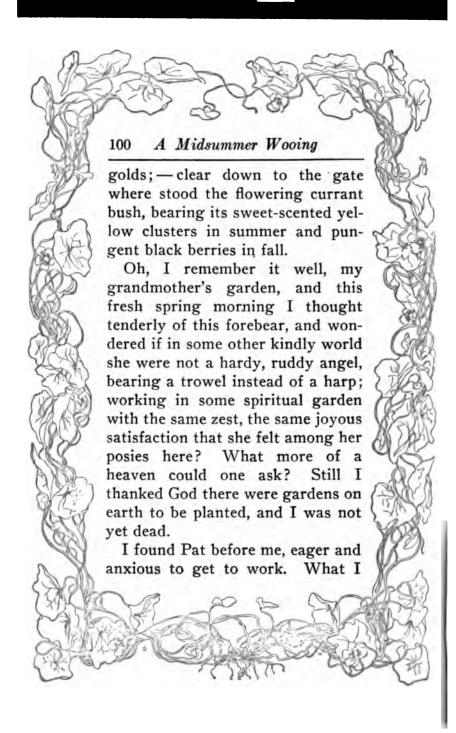




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white and crimson glow of phlox; the bleeding-heart, that always bloomed so early in the spring; the mourning brides and the gay sweet-William (my grandmother's delight), then the single yellow roses that smelled like cinnamon; the big red peonies that flaunted in the sun and the stately blue and lavender flower-de-luce; the pinks and the misty candytuft; and so on up to the wide old porch where the climbing boursalt rose ended the procession.

Down on the other side were the double buttercups, the flowering almond, the spicy-scented southernwood, the bridal wreath, polyanthus, cockscomb, and prince's-feather, the myrtle and the balsam, love in a mist, rosemary and feverfew, wallflowers and mari-



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like about this little Irishman is his zest for doing things. When I have a plan on hand he always enters into it, and this is more than

I can say of any one else in the world. For true sympathy, give me Pat.

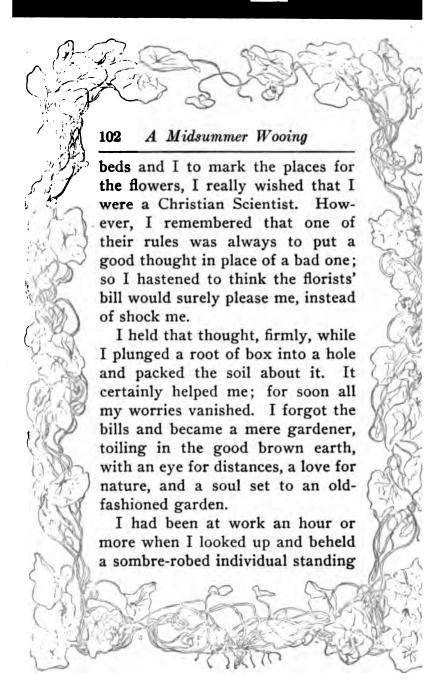
"The top o' the mornin' to ye, missus," said he; "an' is it the ould-fashioned garden we'll be after makin' to-day?"

"It is, Pat," I said; "fetch the plants."

When Pat produced the huge basket of plants I had ordered, I looked over the list and found all complete. Those obliging florists had done their best to please me, but — well — I hoped the bill would not cost me my summer's ward-

As Pat began to rake the long

robe.



beside me. He wore a long coat and a silk hat. I knew it was a minister. I had seen him before; and really, his visit seemed uncalled for. I wondered how he got in. Where were Rhoda's wits? Of all

days in the world this was the one I least cared to pay attention to my soul.

"Good morning, gardener," he said in a rich bass voice.

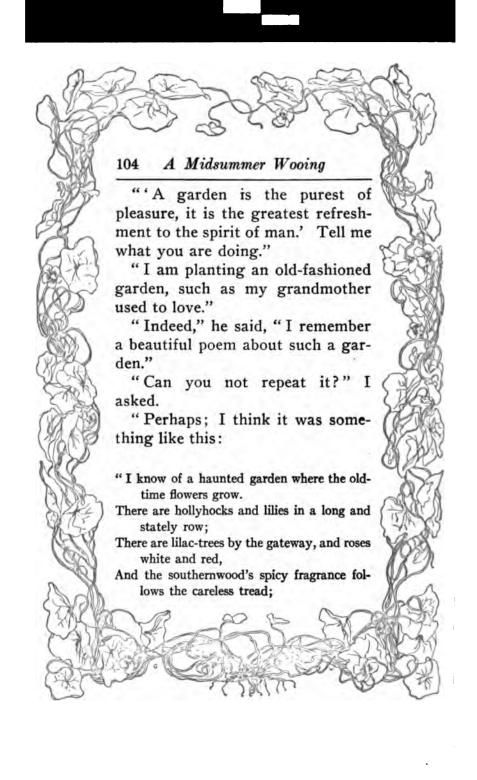
I rose hastily and dusted the soil from my hands. I felt obliged to be polite. "Shall we go in?" I asked.

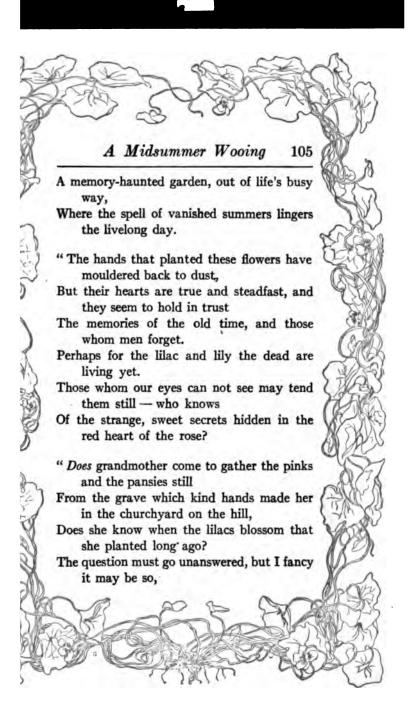
"Not I," he replied, "I have come to see your garden."

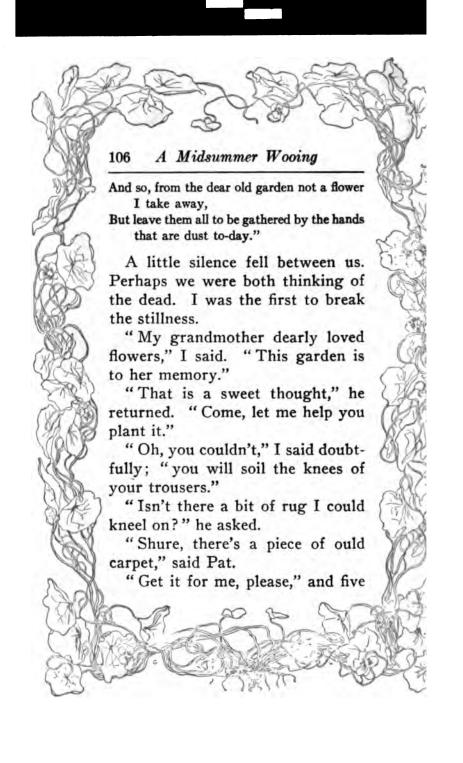
"Have you," I said, my resent-

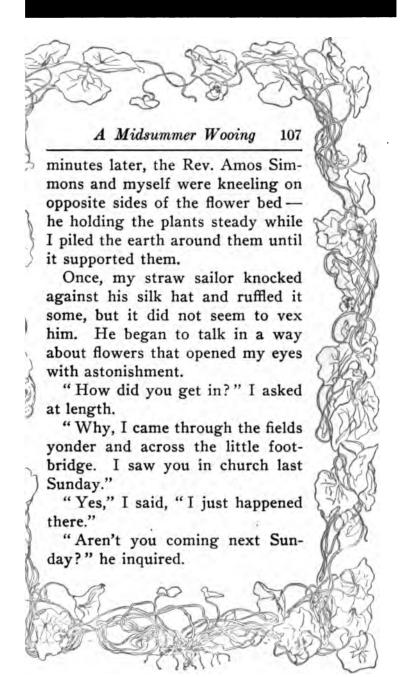
ment abating a trifle. "That I have. There is nothing

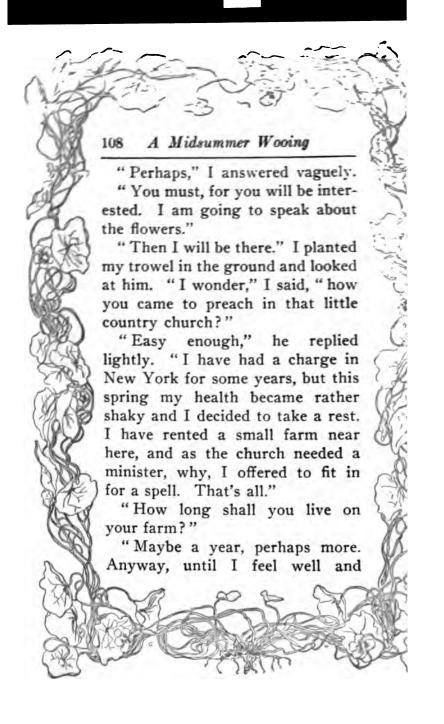
I so delight in as a garden. Was it not Bacon who said:

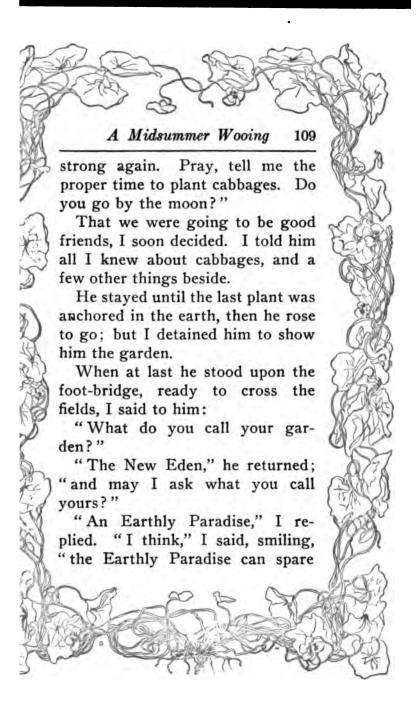


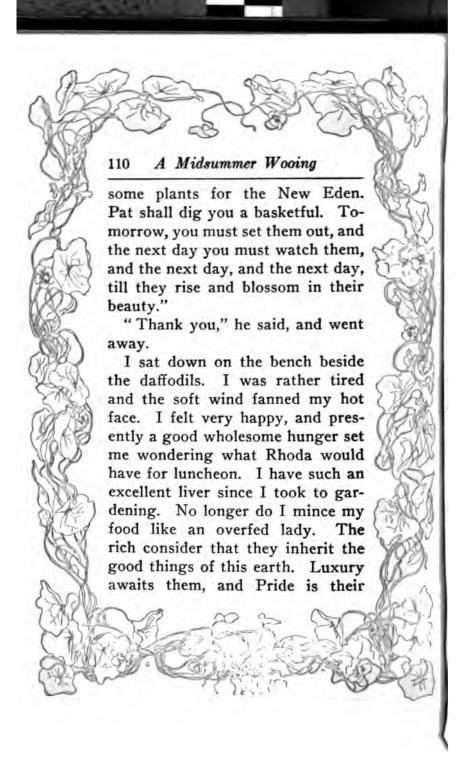


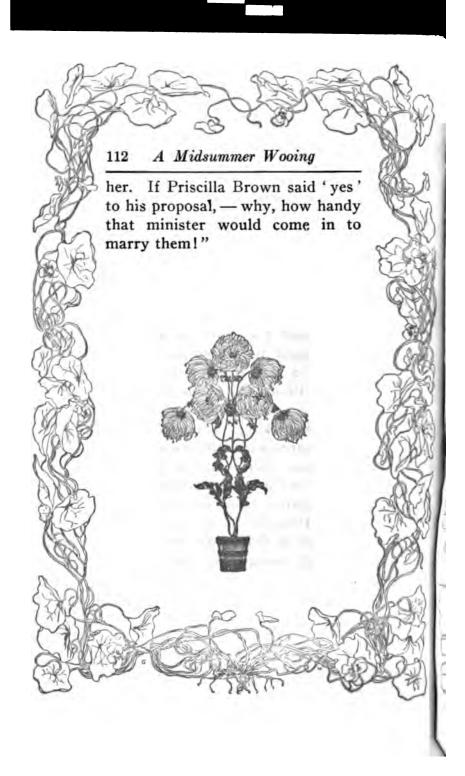


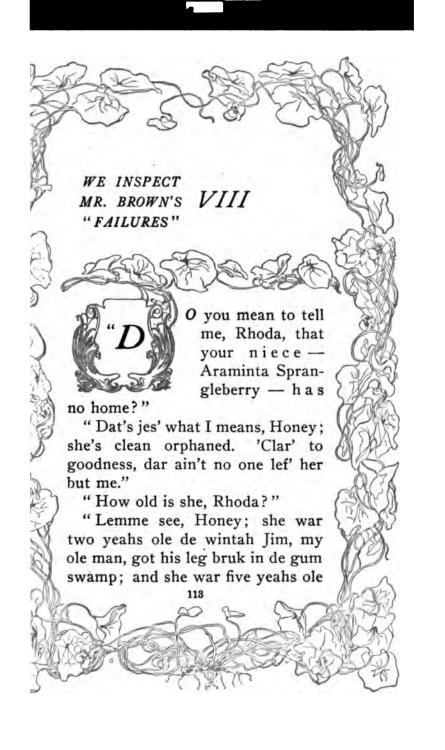


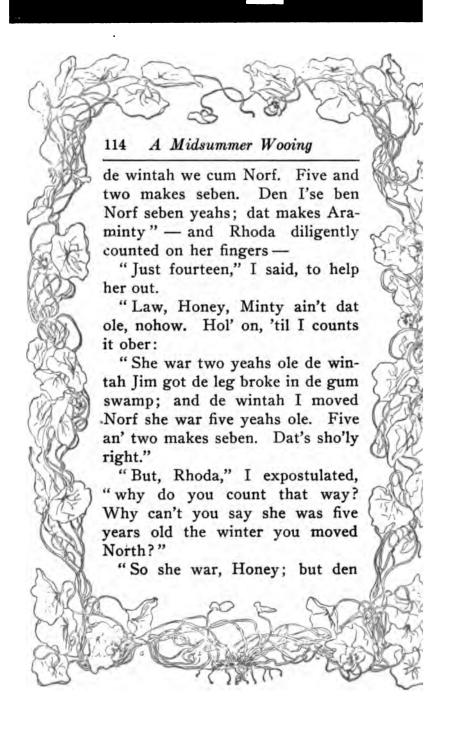


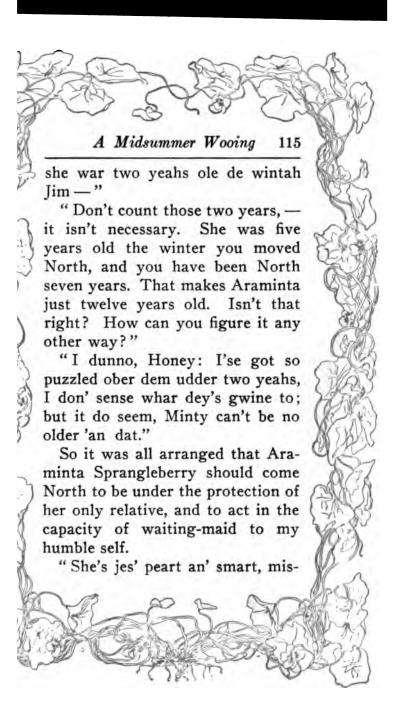


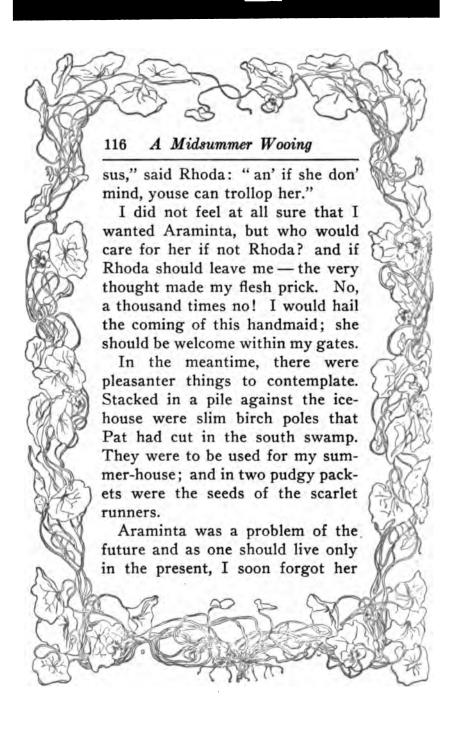


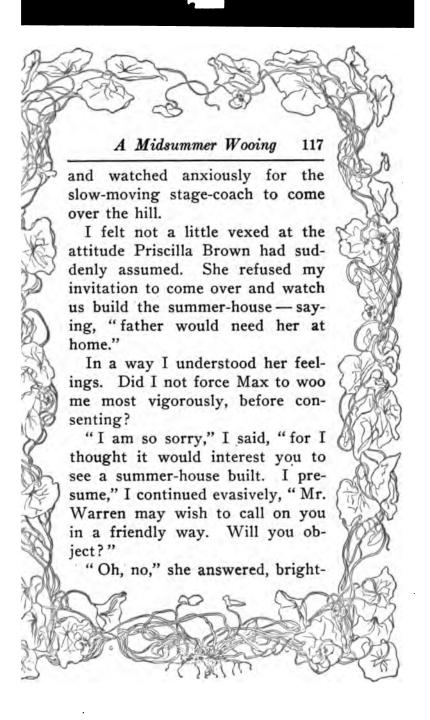


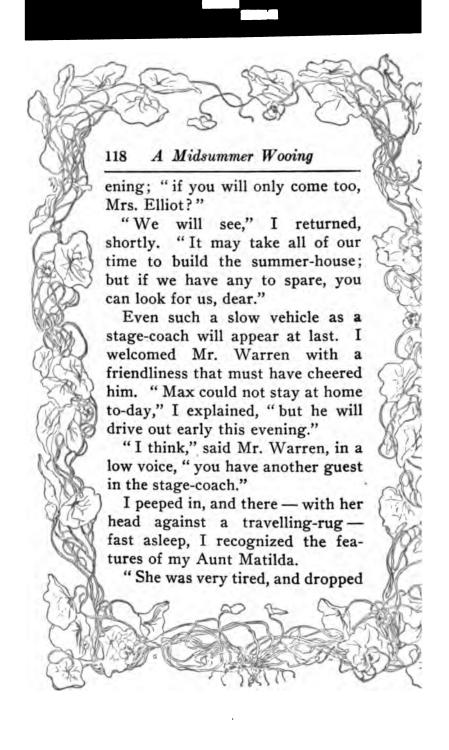


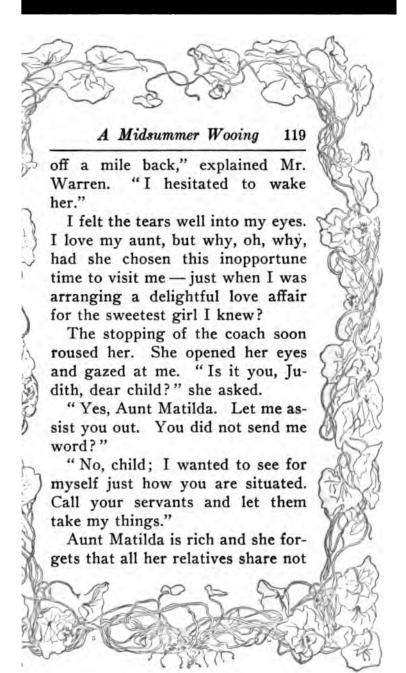


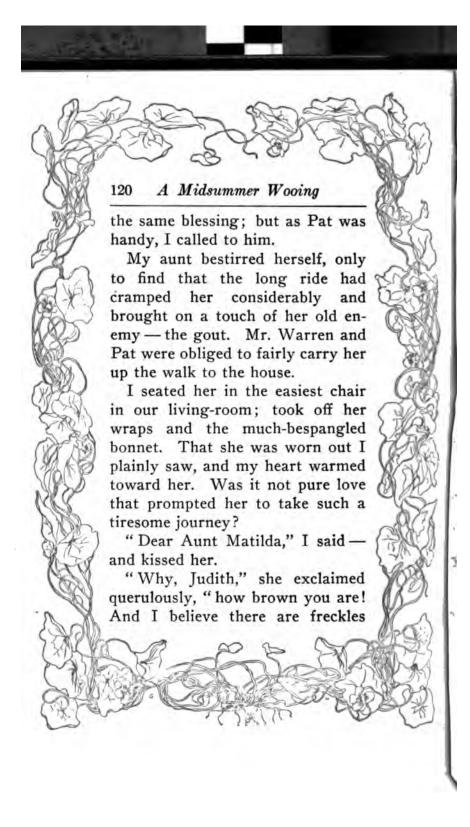


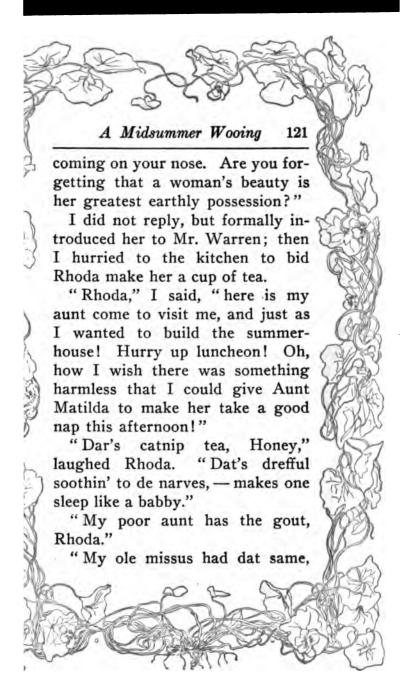


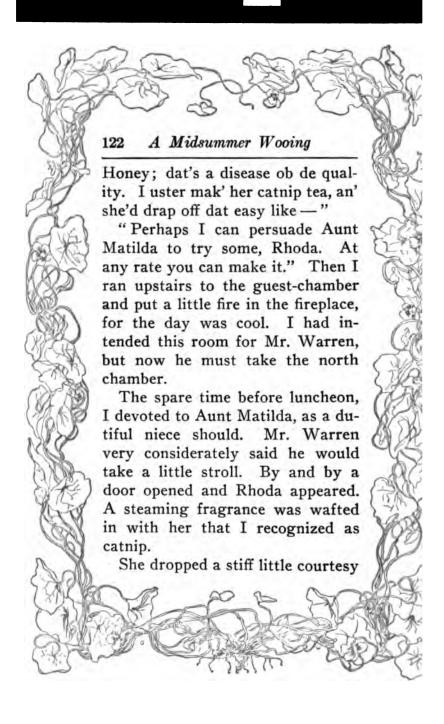


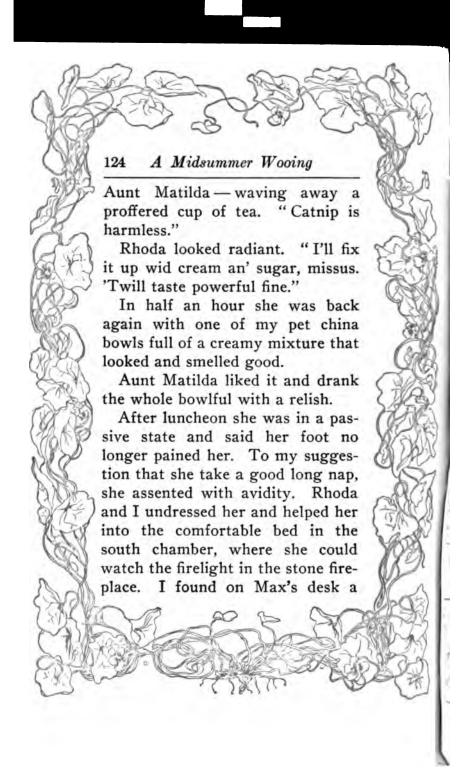


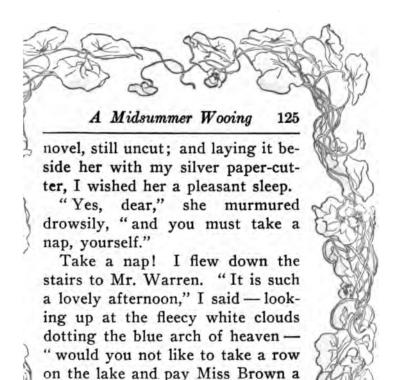








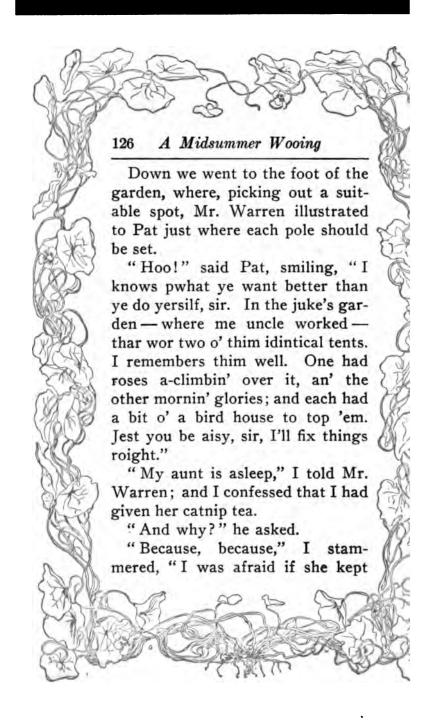


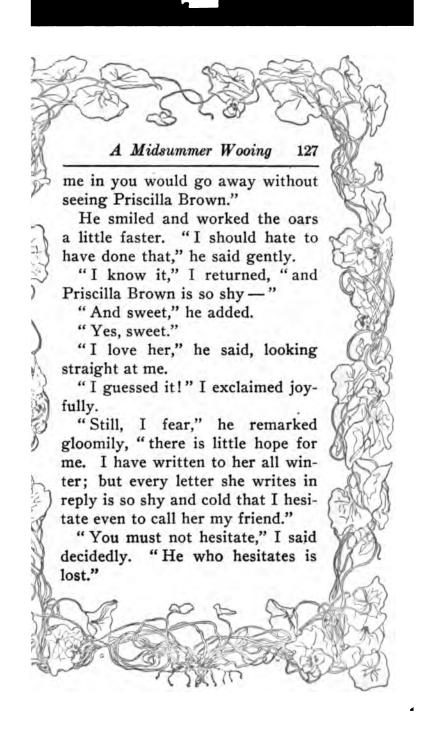


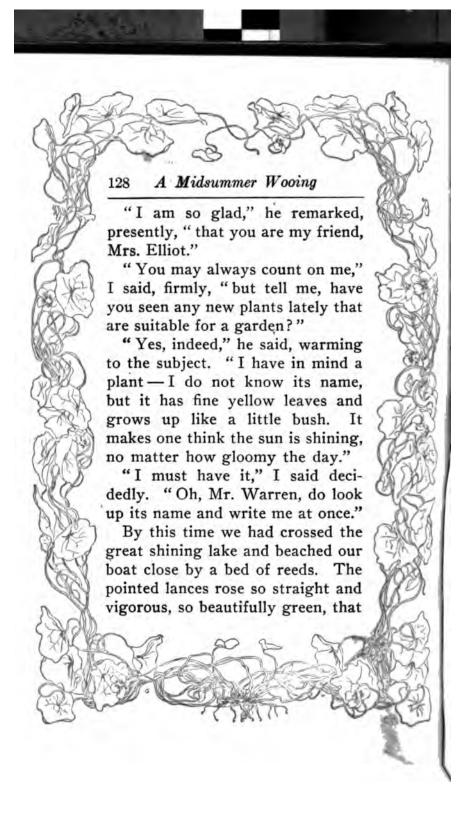
"I would," he said eagerly; "but the summer-house? I must leave to-morrow. Business is more pressing than I thought it was going to be."

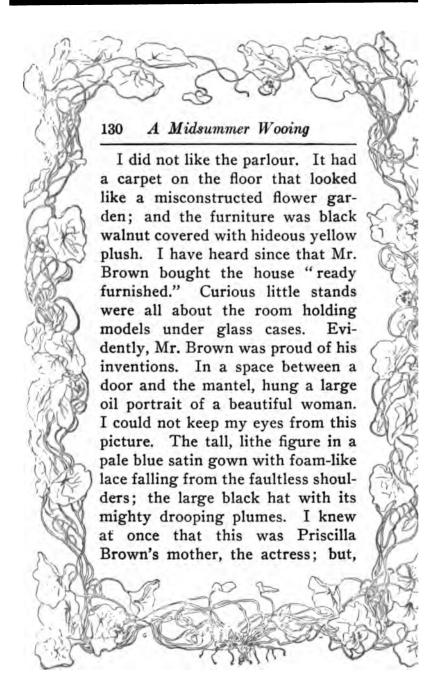
visit?"

"We can show Pat how to set the poles," I said. "Pat is to be trusted."

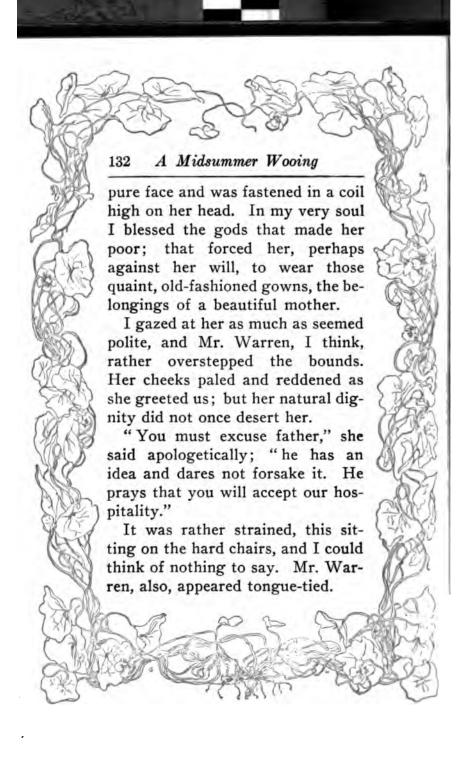


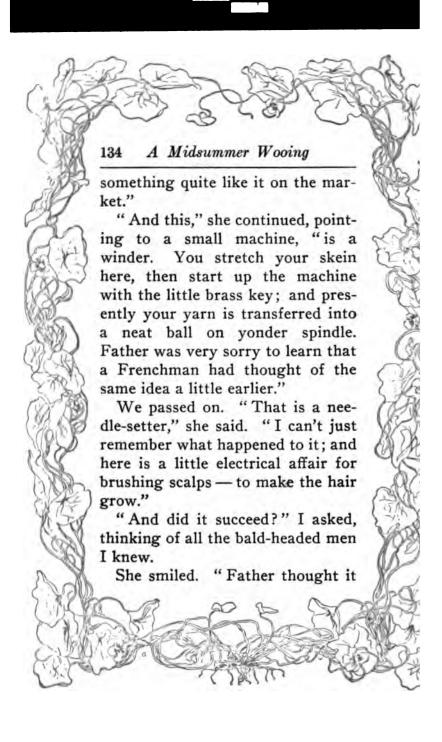


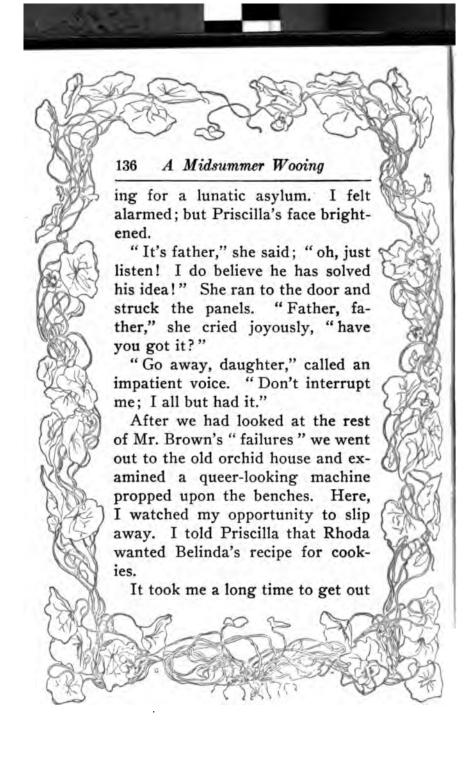


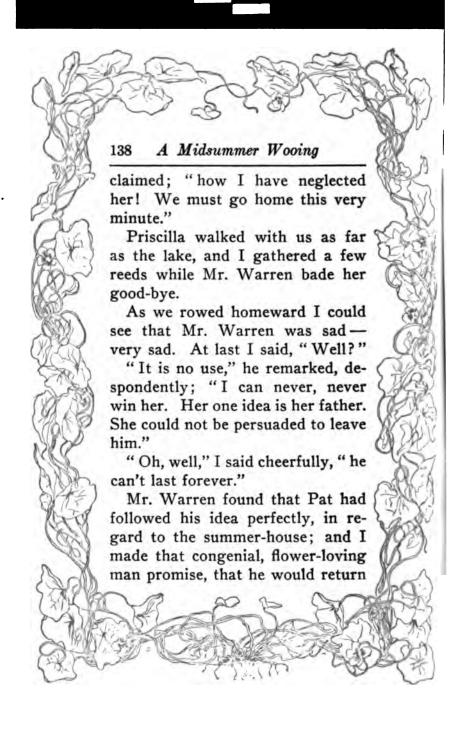


mother's portrait. Her golden hair fell in soft waves about the fresh,

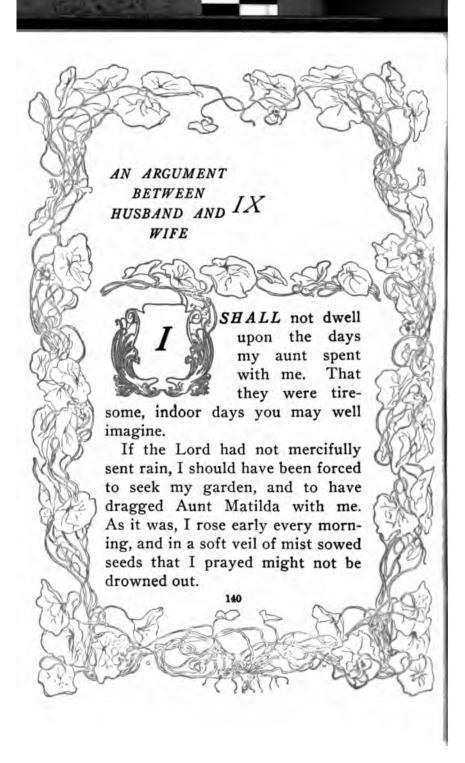










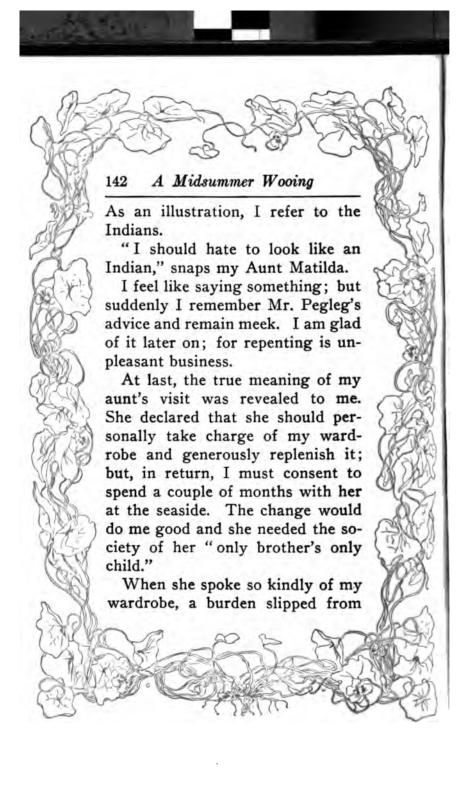


The second day my aunt was with me, she asked to inspect my wardrobe; and I, who hardly knew I had a wardrobe, was forced to drag out all my belongings and to pile them upon the bed before her highly disapproving eyes. Oh, why is my aunt so critical! Would she rather I were dressed in silks, pale and listless, or in neat ginghams, ruddy and strong? Could a sensible person prefer the former?

She tells me she fears that when I grow a little older Max will cease to love me; for then the slight beauty I can now boast of will be gone. I suppose she means that I shall be like a flower — run to gar-

I tell her that people who live out-of-doors do not grow old as quickly as those who live indoors.

den seed.



my shoulders. I began at once to picture delightful visits to florists, where I might spend my allowance without the hampering thoughts of bonnets and needed gowns; but now a cold feeling crept around my heart and spread over my whole body.

"Max is not well," I stammered.

"He says," remarked Aunt Matilda, "that he has not felt so well

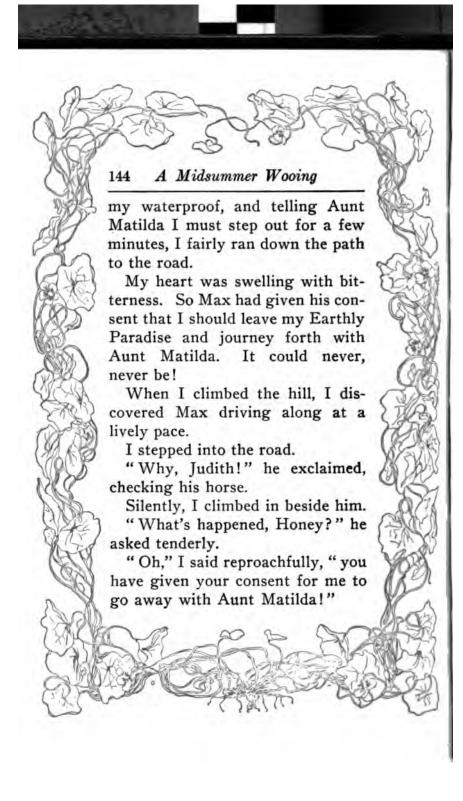
in years. He has given his consent to your going."

"Max said I could go?"

"To be sure, child."

I glanced hastily at the clock. It was after five; Max had already left town to drive home. If I hurried, I might meet him beyond the great hill, and there expostulate with him.

It was still raining, but I put on



"What else could I do?" he said seriously; "she has claims upon you."

"Just when my roses will be out and my lilies budding," I continued; "just when I have invited Mr. Pegleg to spend a month with

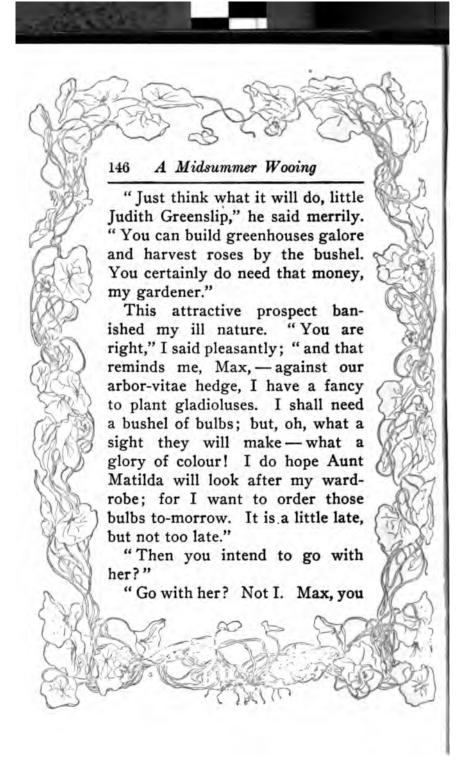
"But, Judith," he urged, "Aunt Matilda says you are one-sided. She thinks you are carrying this

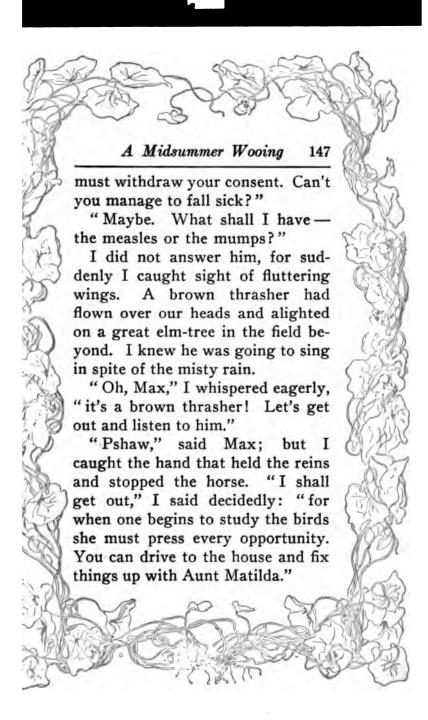
mania for gardening too far."

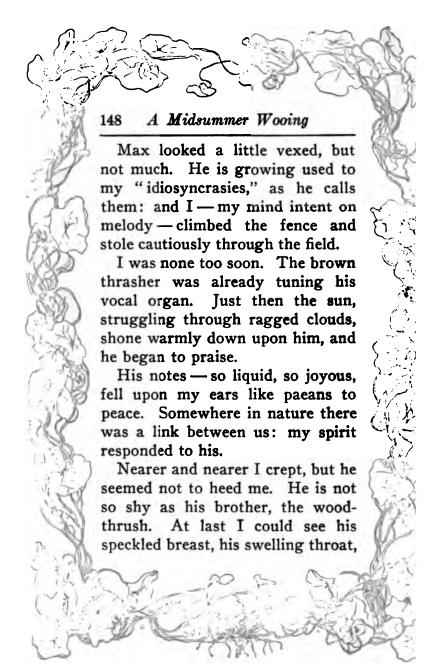
me. I'll die first!"

Max and I have been married some years, but never, never before have I felt so put out at him.

"She thinks," I said, bitterly, "because God made me to adore His works, before the works of man, that I am not a true woman. I wish she would endow an orphan asylum with her money; I don't want it."







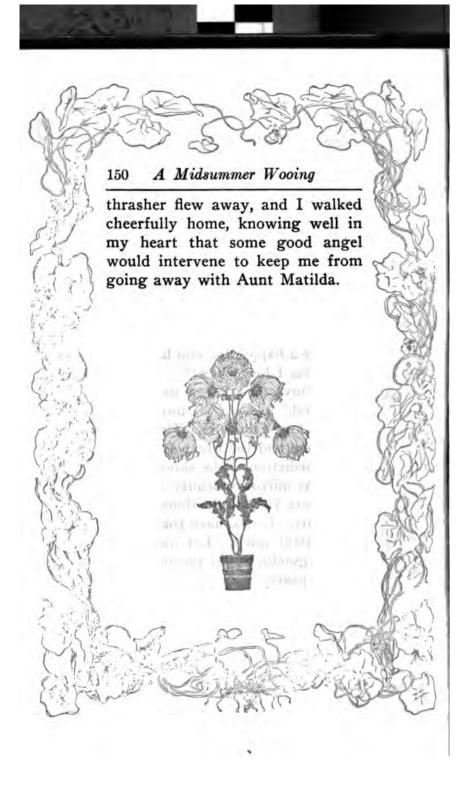
and note the look of ecstasy in his raised head.

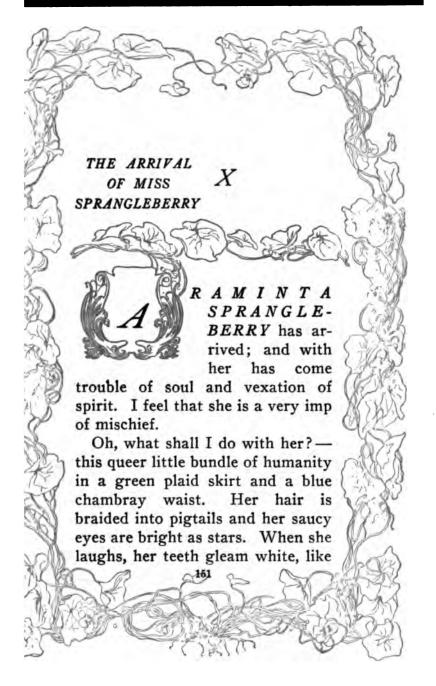
I knew he was telling God that he appreciated all the greenness of this lovely earth; its wealth of flowers and its shining waters. "Oh, God," he chanted, "Thou art good to me—a bird; Thou hast given me a happy, trustful heart. I love Thee, I love Thee!"

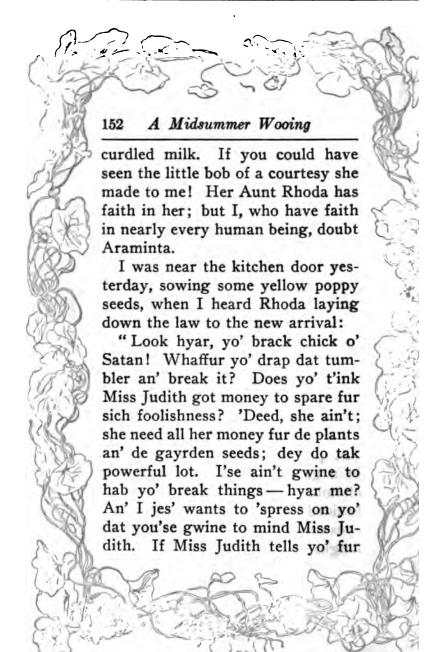
Then my spirit began to praise.

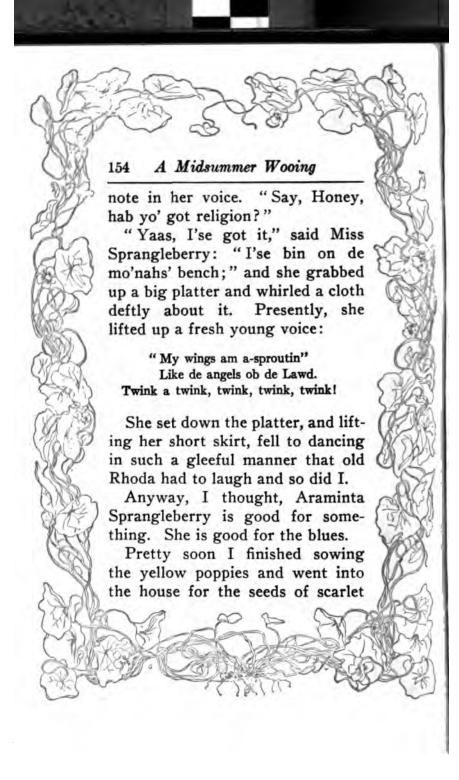
"Oh, God," I said, "I, too, thank
Thee. I love Thy work. The sky is
Thy glory and the green trees are
Thy benediction. The shining water is Thy mirror of beauty, and the
flowers are the kindly thoughts of
Thy heart. I, too, have the merry
and trustful spirit. Let me abide
in Thy goodness, let me dwell in
tents of peace."

The song ended, the brown









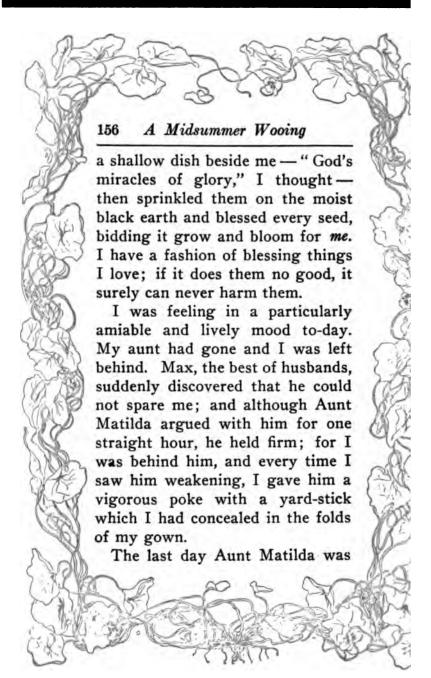
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ones. Pat was digging me a large bed for these seeds at the left of my new summer-house, just where one could look through the opening and see the array of scarlet banners flaunting in every idle breeze. Oh, how I love a bed of gorgeous poppies! A sweet woman has said something like this about them:

"A poppy seed—it lies in the hand, a grain of dust; motionless, unlovely, dead. Yet think what it holds! The cool gray-green of upward-springing stalks and leaves; the compact calyx, studded with its hundreds of protecting hairs; and within, crumpled like a baby's hand, the exquisite shining silk of gorgeous petals! sunset rose, faint misty white, bold magnificent scar-

let — all this in an atom of dust."

I poured the tiny, tiny seeds into



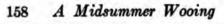
with me, she made me quite adore her; for she told me stories of my father's early life, and in a fit of loneliness kissed me again and again — calling me her "dear only brother's only child!" She asked

ful, replied:
"An urn for my front yard."

I should have known better; still I hope she will not forget to send it.

me in tender tones what I most desired on earth? I, alas! so truth-

That last day I literally dragged her through the garden—it was far too pleasant to stay in the house. Oh, how I did enjoy telling her about my flower beds; how this one would soon be in bloom and that one a little later. I showed her the spring and urged her to go as far as the grove with me; but just then her gouty foot took a

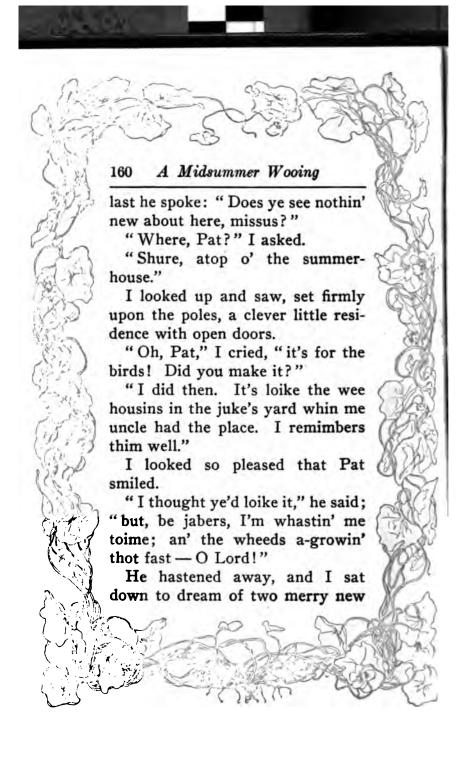


twinge and I had to call Pat to help me support her back to the house.

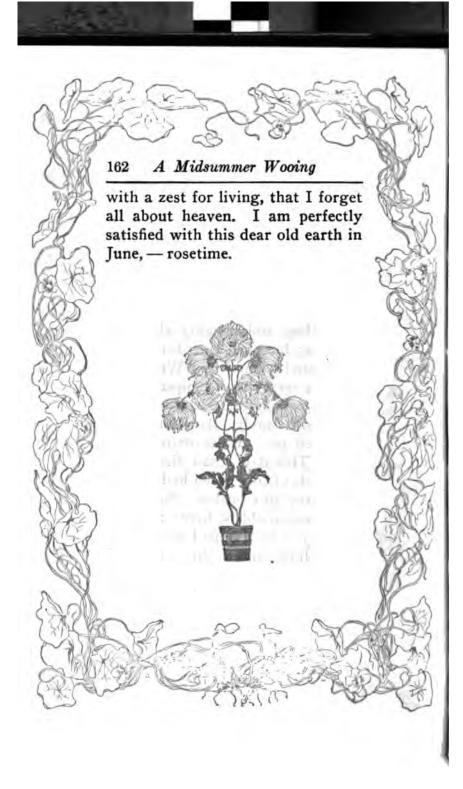
Some people think the rich enjoy themselves; but I feel sure they cannot. The law of compensation is so just, that indigestion or the gout nearly always sets in to even things up.

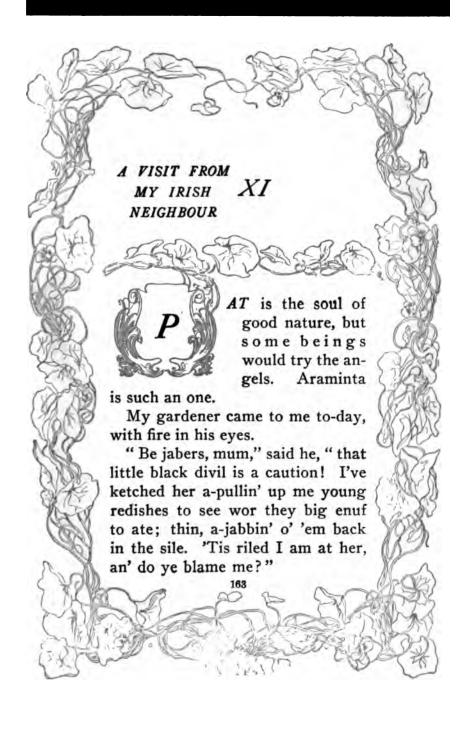
I felt sad when my Aunt Matilda kissed me good-bye; but not for long. I am of a peculiarly mercurial temperament. I suddenly remembered a basket of carnations that had come from the florist's and went to plant them. It is a good thing to have one's mind occupied when sad.

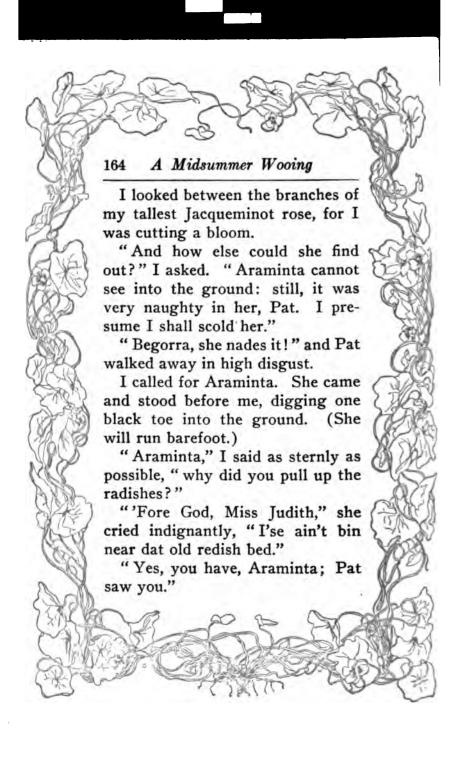
I was thinking of my aunt now, as I carefully smoothed the red poppy bed. I felt so happy to know that she was there and I was here.

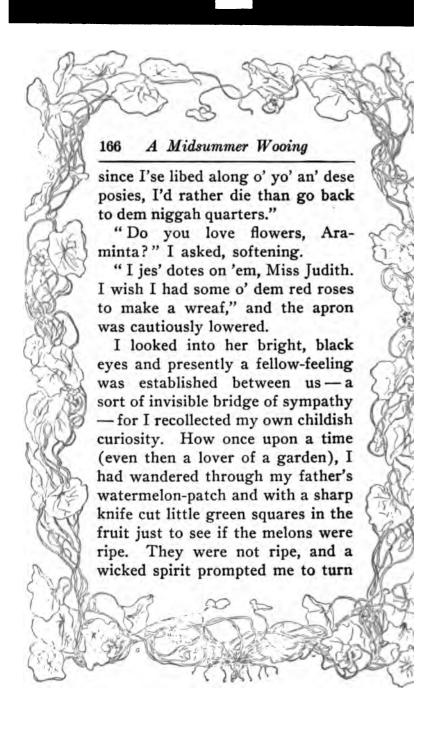


die in June, and I don't think I shall; for when that month comes round I am so exhilarated, so filled









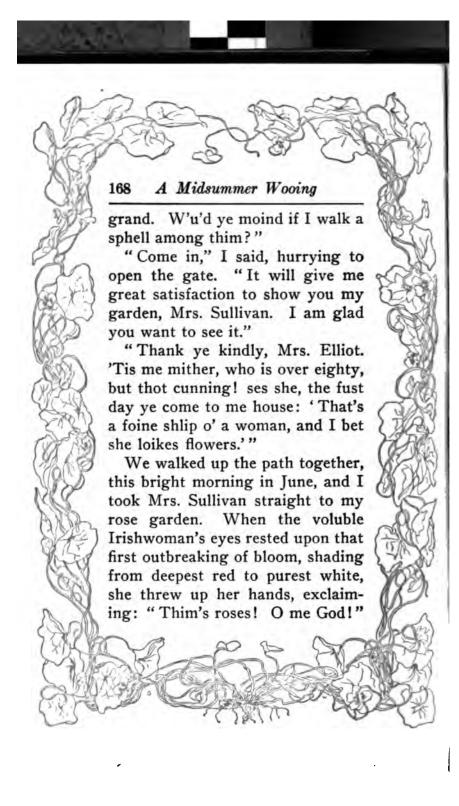
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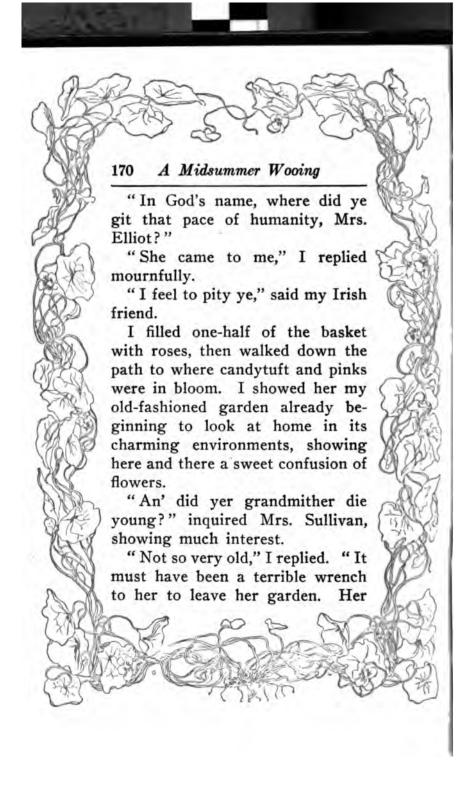
each green globe downward, exactly where the kind earth would hide its cruel wound. When my father discovered this he said, in a very dignified manner:

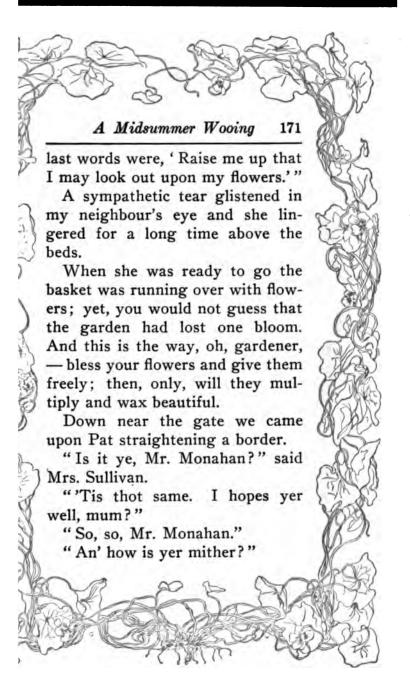
"Judith, you are young, but you are very deceitful. Your care in turning my melons to conceal your mischief has decided me. I should do very wrong if I failed to chastise you."

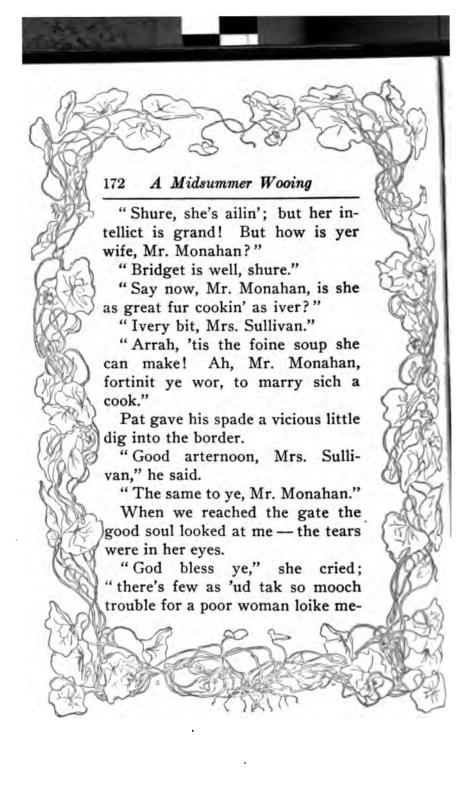
My distaste for that chastisement is still with me. I would be kinder to Araminta. I gave her the roses, and peace was between us. She ran off for twine to tie up the wreath, and I walked down the path toward the gate, for I perceived that some one was standing before it.

"Arrah, now, Mrs. Elliot," called a gay Irish voice, "but ye hev a foine garden! The flowers do look

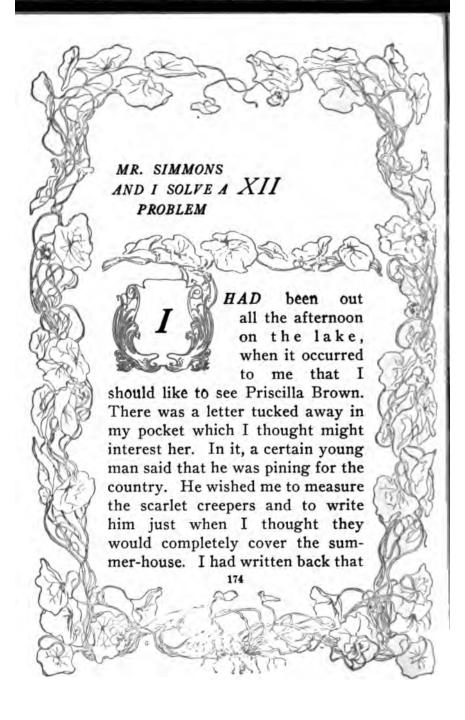


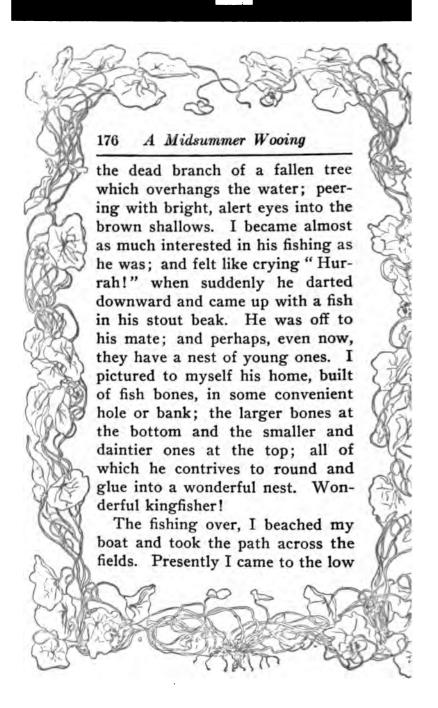


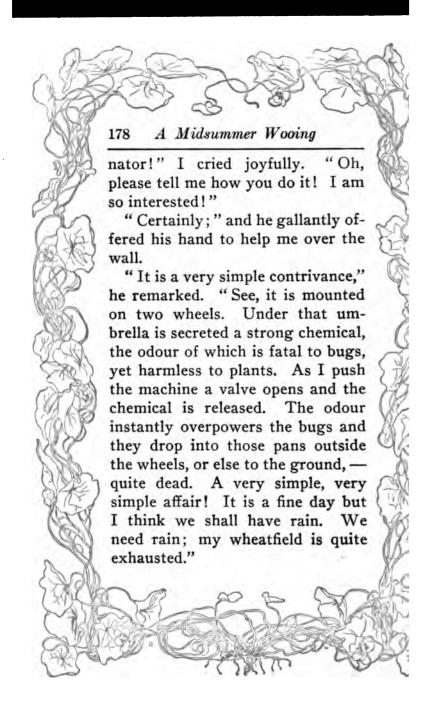








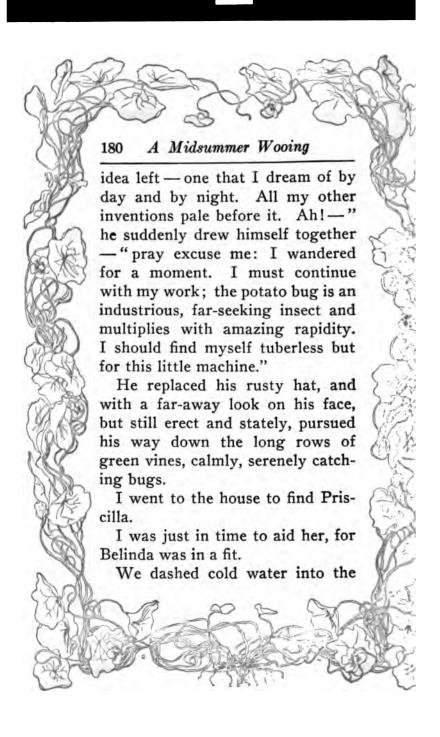


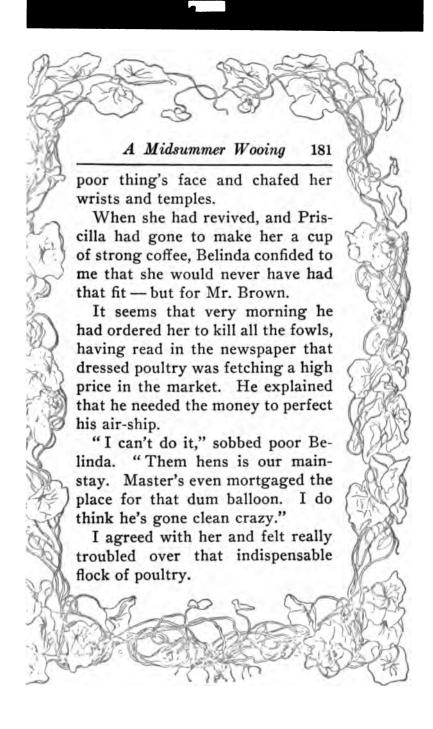


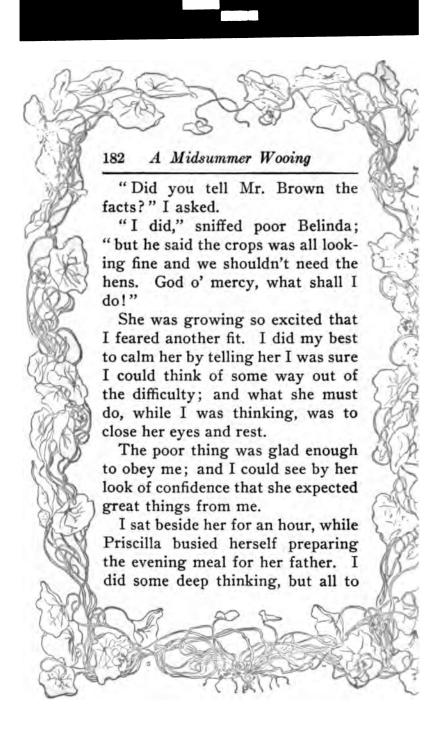
I was not so easily put off. "Mr. Brown," I said, earnestly, "I consider your bug-exterminator a wonderful machine. For two summers I have been deeply interested in the slaughter of bugs. It is a vital question with me. That simple affair, as you call it, ought to net you a

He smiled in a sweet, sad way that touched my heart. "You are young," he remarked, "and believe in things, but I am past seventy. When I was your age—well, I should be almost afraid, now, to meet that bright wraith, what castles I built, what plans I cherished! I saw a fortune in every simple thing. Now I am like a clam; I have two valves which I close securely over my enthusiasms. Still,"

-he paused - "I have one great





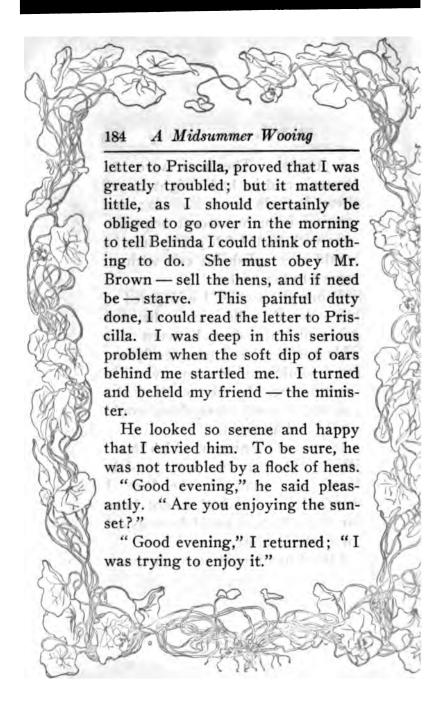


no purpose. The hens were Mr. Brown's and he had a right to sell them, Belinda or no Belinda; and judging from my recent acquaintance with him, I felt pretty sure he would accomplish his end without regard to her wishes.

When she awoke, I whispered to her—for Priscilla was in the next room and the door between was wide open—that I must go home; but I would send her some word in the morning. In the meantime she was not to worry; everything would surely end all right.

It was an evening in which to rejoice. The sunset was superb. From my boat on the lake I watched it; and had it not been for those hens, I could have asked for nothing more.

That I had forgotten to show my

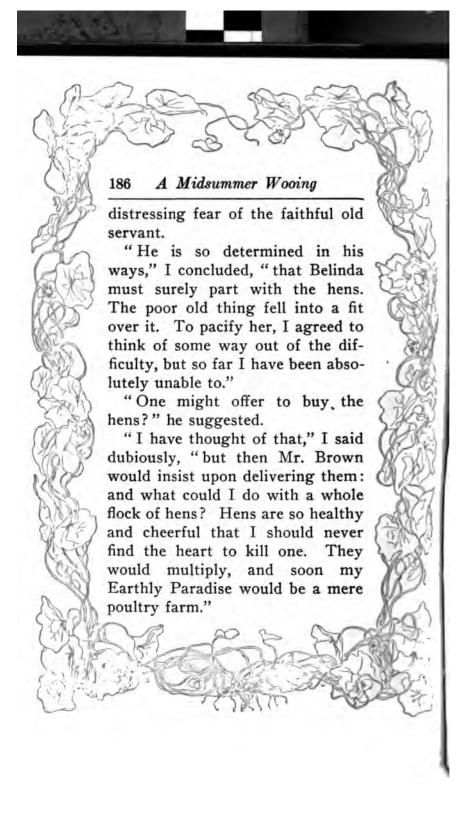


"Trying?" He looked a little peculiar. "I supposed it was never an effort for you to appreciate nature, Mrs. Elliot."

"It is not," I said more cheerfully; "but you see, one cannot think of two things at the same time."

"Are you trying to do that?"

"I was, and succeeding poorly." I rocked the boat a little impatiently. "I wish," I said presently, "one need not worry about one's neighbour;" and then, as he looked so masterful, so helpful, with his clear-cut face and wealth of silvery hair outlined against the glowing sky, I took him into my confidence. I told him of the eccentricities of Mr. Brown, his altogether impractical ideas; the sweetness and trust of his daughter Priscilla, and the



"That would never do," he said, laughing.

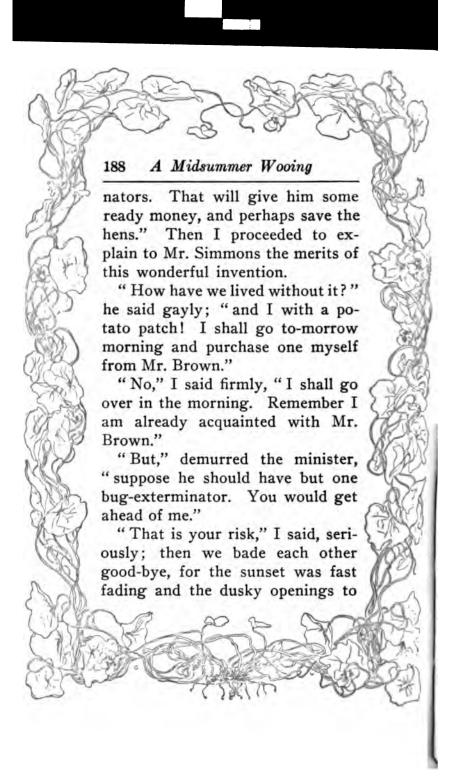
"And poor Belinda," I continued, "would be no better off in the end; for Mr. Brown would squander the money. We must think of something better. Mr. Simmons," I said impressively, "you row around the lake in that direction and I will take

this. Let us think deeply upon the subject. Perhaps, when we meet again, an inspiration will have come to one of us."

"A good idea," he cried; and picking up his oars, rowed briskly away, I following his example. When we met, Mr. Simmons still

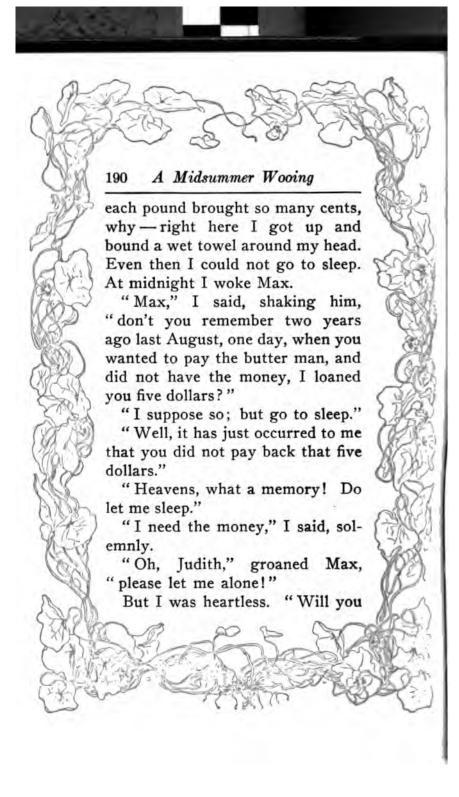
looked puzzled, but my face was bright with inspiration.

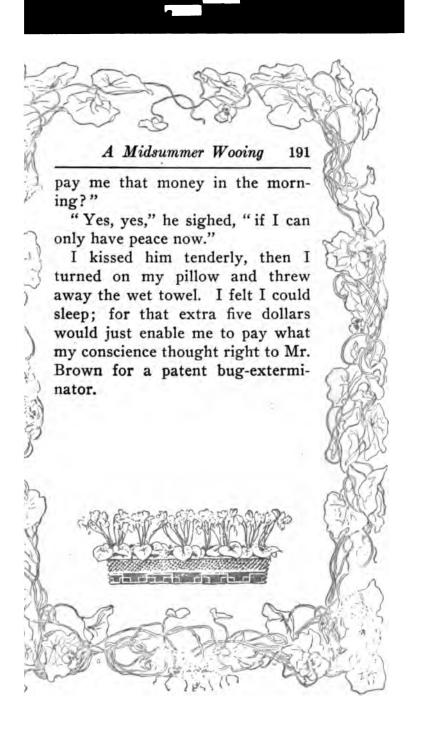
"I have it!" I exclaimed, delightedly; "I shall purchase one of Mr. Brown's patent bug-extermi-

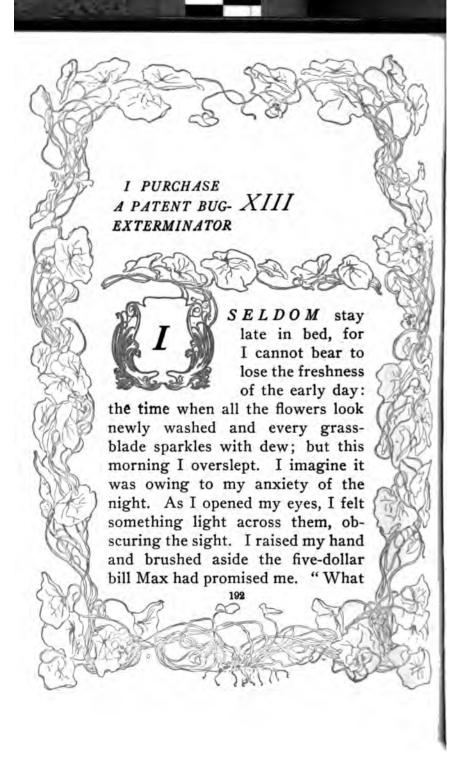


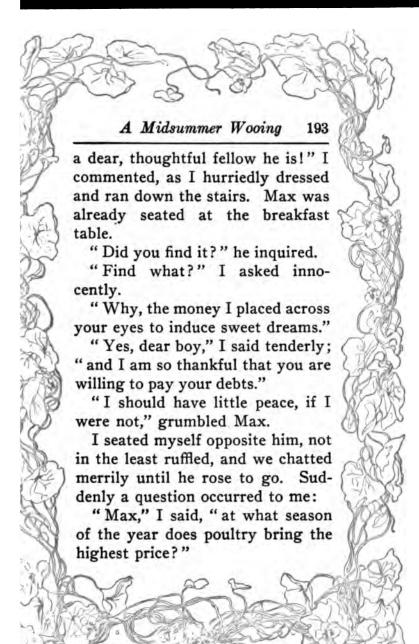
the woods were turning purple. I knew Max would be at home, waiting for me. So he was, and quite vexed; for Max seems to think his home-coming should always find me there to greet him. Just as if I had not business of my own once in a while!

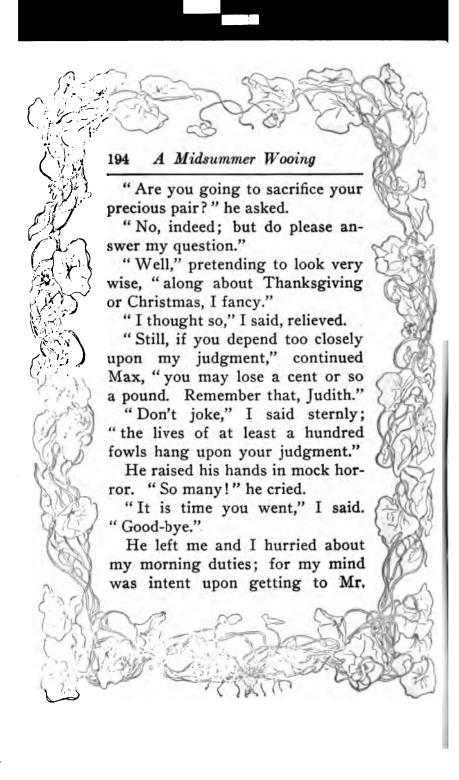
That evening I spent a good deal of time calculating. I found it would take some close figuring to enable me to purchase a bug-exterminator. It is quite unwise to figure just at bedtime. My brain refused to quiet down; it even took upon itself the task of counting Belinda's hens; and reckoning up (if she were obliged to sell them) the money Mr. Brown would derive from the sacrifice. Certainly, if Belinda had so many hens and each hen weighed so many pounds and











Brown's as soon as possible. However, I had promised to help Pat train the morning-glories; and this must be attended to before I could step into my boat and row away.

When I reached Mr. Brown's the first person I encountered was Priscilla. She was walking down the path to the lake.

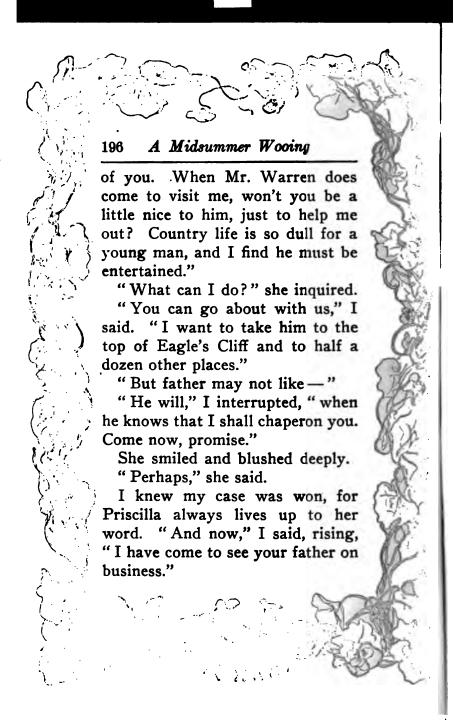
I kissed her joyfully; then, as we sat side by side at the foot of an old tree, I read her my letter and watched the soft colour come and go in her delicate cheeks.

"What I admire most in Mr. Warren," I said, as I folded my letter, "is his high regard for plants.

He would make an excellent florist."

She smiled but kept silent.

"Priscilla," I remarked presently, "I want to ask a real favour





"Country life is so dull for a young man, and I find he must be entertained"

SEN YORK MICIETY LIBRARY found Mr. Brown deep in meditation beside his air-ship. "Mr. Brown," I said, briskly, "I would like to purchase one of your bug-exterminators."

He eyed me hazily, and his mind appeared to be struggling back to the realities of life.

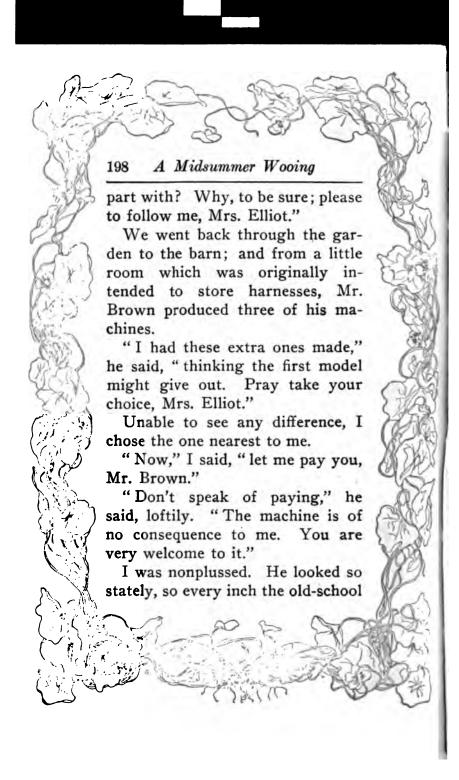
"I—I did not understand you," he said.

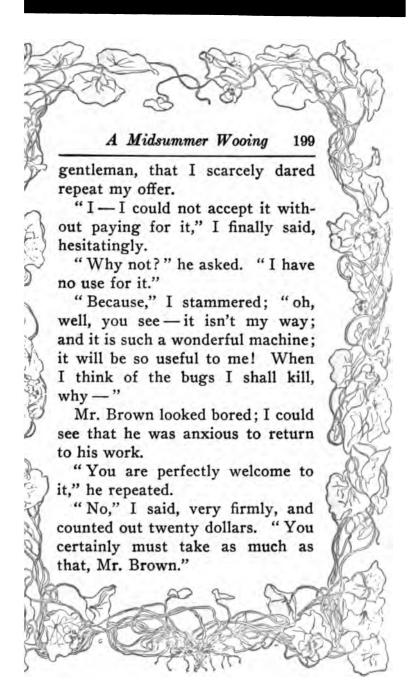
I repeated my desire.

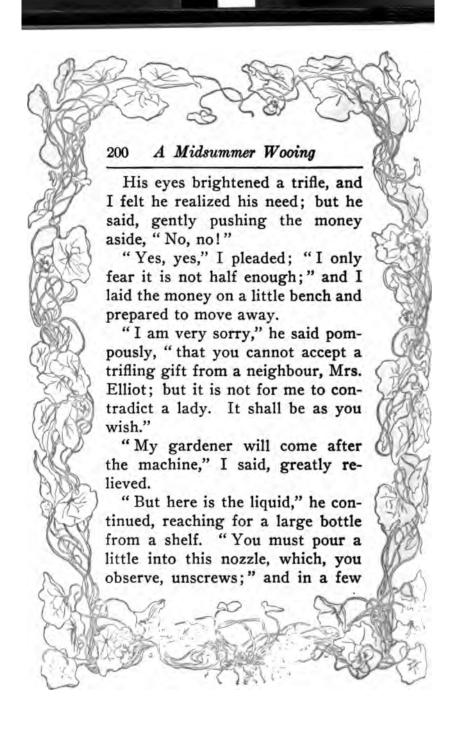
His lank face brightened.

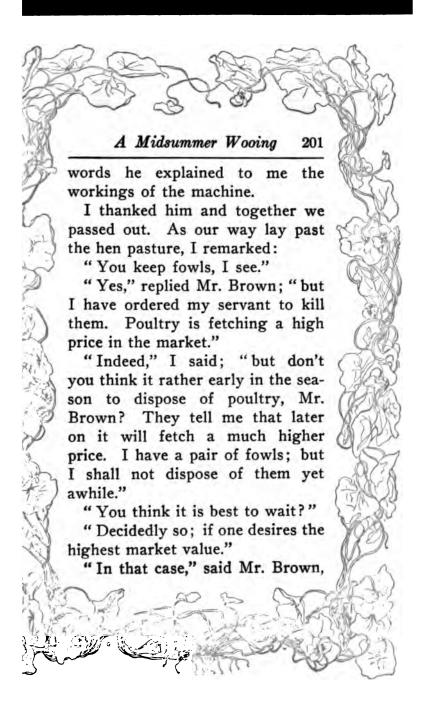
"Ah let me see - have I on

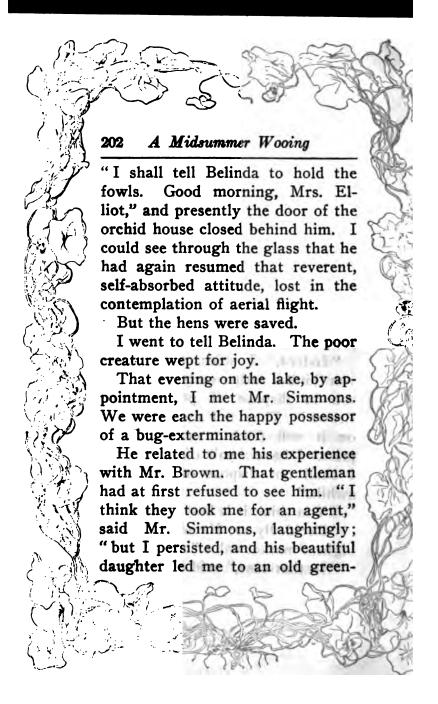
"Ah, let me see - have I one to

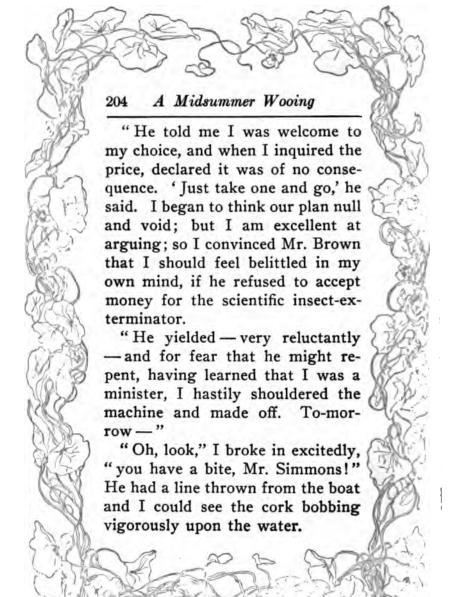












A Midsummer Wooing

He quickly drew in and hauled up a fine bass. "Seven!" he said triumphantly.

I rowed back a little so as not to disturb any unwary fish; but though he cast his line repeatedly he was not again successful.

"I shall not try to catch more," he said, winding up the reel, "I have enough for breakfast."

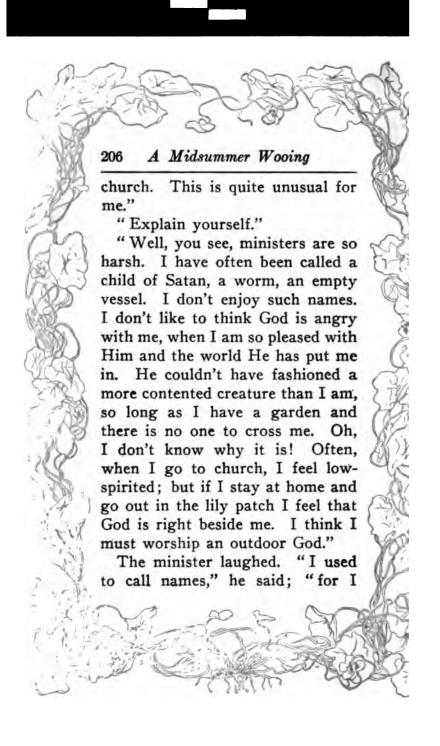
"Did you see me in church last Sunday?" I inquired.

"Yes," he replied, "I recognized you."

"And I really liked the sermon," I continued. "It was very encouraging; quite unlike the most of sermons."

"Why?" he asked.

"Oh, because; after I had listened to it, I felt in just as good spirits as when I entered the



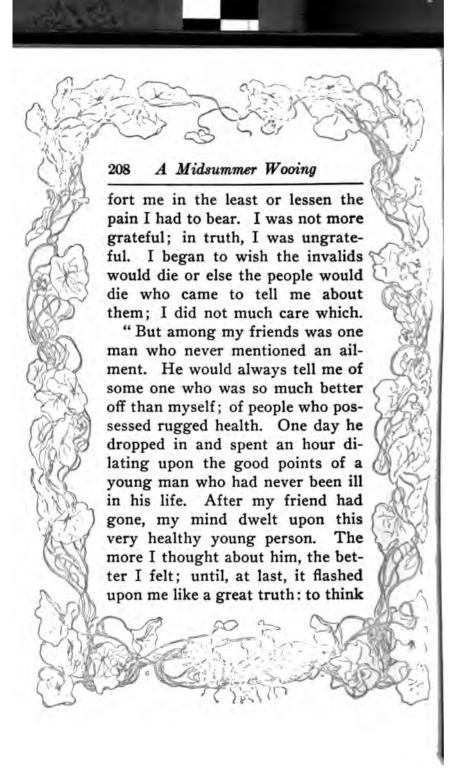
A Midsummer Wooing

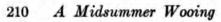
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thought people could only be made good by pointing out how awfully wicked they might be. 'Worm of the dust' was quite a choice phrase with me. Shall I tell you how I happened to change about?"

"Do," I said.

"I was very ill once, and people - friends, you know - dropped in to see me. Nearly all of them told me of some one who was worse off They related the than myself. most alarming symptoms possessed by this other man, and ended by congratulating me that I was not like him. I had always supposed that we could estimate our blessings only by comparison; but will you believe me, I found that I felt no better to learn that Mr. Jones' life hung by a hair; his alarming symptoms did not com-





"Somehow, my ideas crept into the newspapers; and before two weeks were over, I had received three calls to churches that assured me that there was not a saint among them.

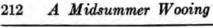
"I chose the poorest church. The first Sunday I preached, the house was crowded with 'sinners,' as they called themselves. pews were free and there was no fixed salary to be paid the pastor only voluntary contributions - so I felt myself a free man. I was no longer a hireling; I could say what I pleased. 'Sinners,' I said, 'there is hope for you; but if you expect me to tell you how to mend your sins you will be disappointed. Comparisons have become odious to me; I shall only tell you of the good things God has done for all

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alike; the birthright of strength and happiness that He intends for every living soul.'

"Then I preached them a sermon of good cheer. When I had finished I remarked: 'Now, I shall not expect this crop of sinners to be present at the evening service; just stay away and let others come.' They obeyed me; and I looked that night upon a fresh crowd of unfamiliar faces.

"So it went on. I became a regular blessing-hunter. Everywhere I sought for good on this earth. How did I succeed? Why, some Sundays it seemed to me I couldn't get the good I had discovered into the whole church. I was so eager to tell about it, that I cut short the prayers. Do you know," and Mr. Simmons turned the boat a trifle to



the right, "there are no would-be sinners; there are no utterly hard-ened hearts. I don't believe there is a soul in this world that really wants to be bad. Poor things, they are only astray; they need to be encouraged, to be told of joy and love, to be led gently back to paths of peace."

"How did you address those sinners?" I inquired.

"As sons of God!"

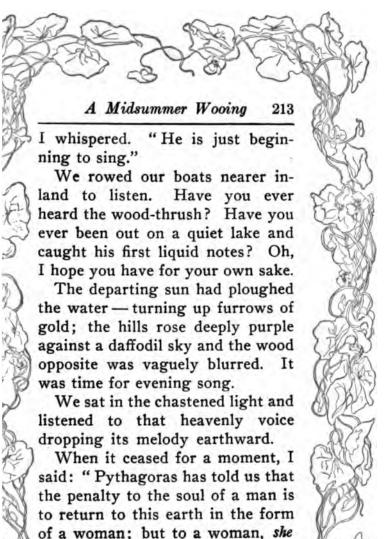
"And you did not tell them the world was teeming with wickedness?"

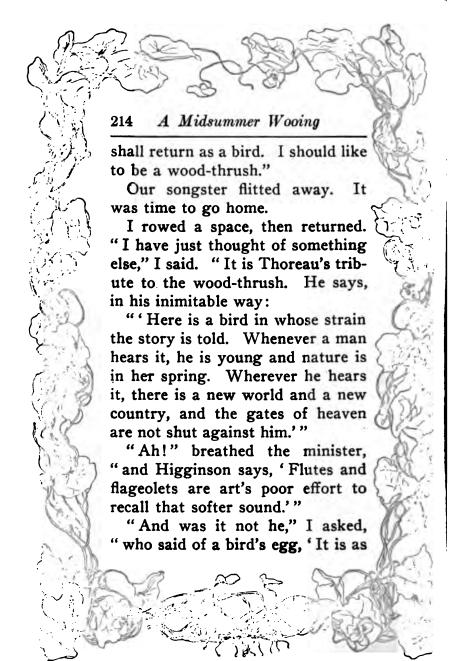
"I told them it was running over with good, and I believe it is."

"Well," I said, "what happened next?"

"A revival," replied Mr. Simmons, "that astonished me."

"Hush! I hear a wood-thrush,"





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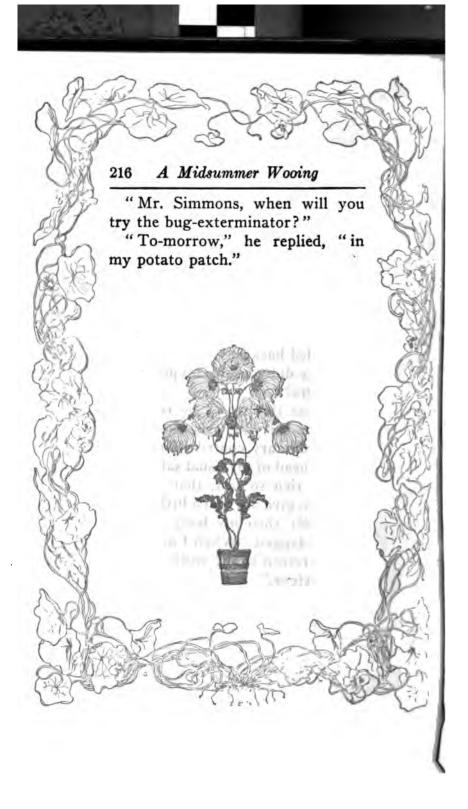
if a pearl opened and an angel sang?"

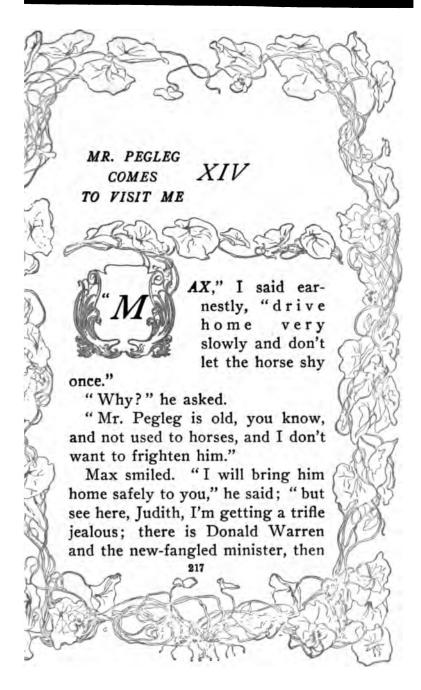
I could have kept on quoting to that minister; but the sun was quite gone and violet shadows were edging the lake, looking almost black among the tall rushes. So I said "Good night;" but repented and called back:

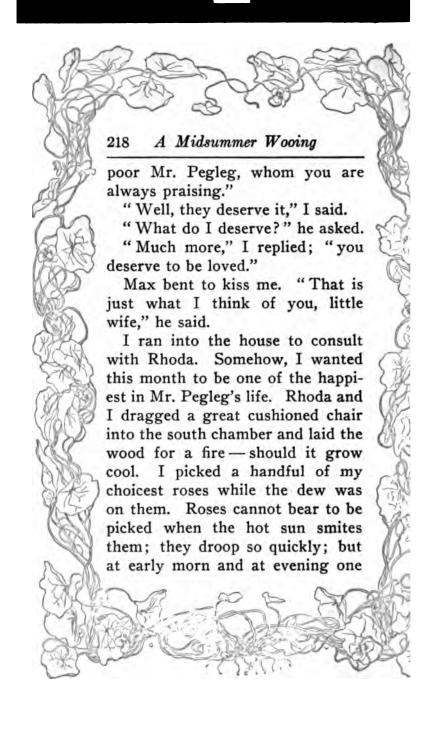
"Why did you give up preaching to sinners?"

"'Twas this way," he returned, his voice carrying over the water: "the voluntary contributions went so far ahead of my usual salary and I grew rich so fast, that I determined to give my soul a little growing spell; then my body was becoming fagged. When I am rested I shall return to my work with renewed vigor."

I called again:







can safely cut them and they will remain fresh for a long time. I placed my flowers in a tall green vase on the table and my coarse print Bible beside it: some little volumes by John Burroughs, for Mr. Pegleg loves to read about the

Rhoda watched me, standing in the doorway, with arms akimbo, her favourite attitude in repose.

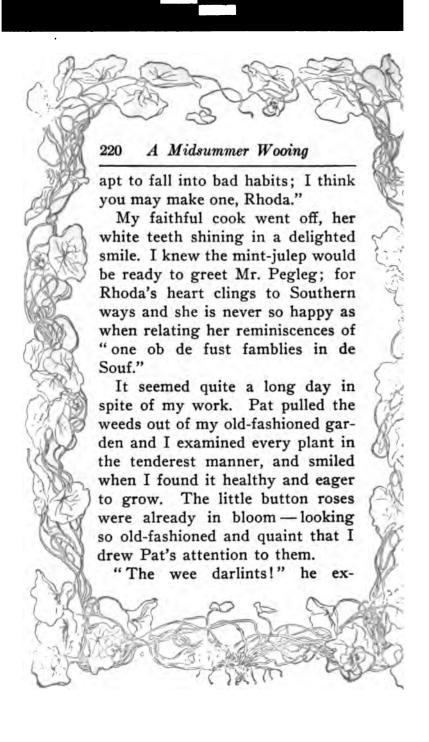
birds and the flowers.

"Honey," she said at last, "can't I mak' dat ole man a mint-julep?"

"It would be nice, Rhoda," I said; "but there's liquor in a mint-julep."

"Jes' a tech, Honey, jes' a tech! De mint bed's so fraish! I'se kin mak' a mint-julep powerful good. Dev's mighty heartenin'."

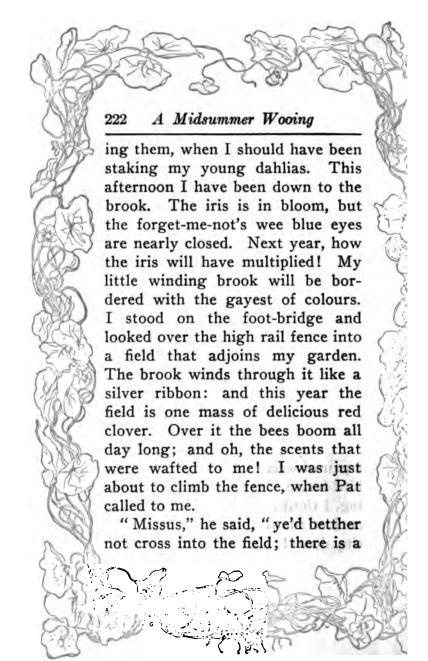
"To be sure," I said, "Mr. Pegleg is past eighty. He wouldn't be



stand, don't you?"
"Shure, mum, thot same we must," replied Pat.

as pleasant as possible. You under-

To-day I have made a discovery: a pair of wrens have rented our new bird-house. They came this morning, I think; and such a chattering, such a running in and out of the tiny doors! I spent an hour watch-

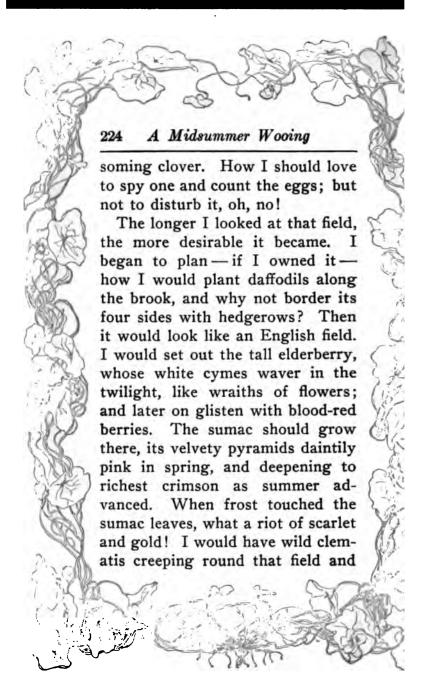


bull in the lane yender; and shure, the fence is poor enough."

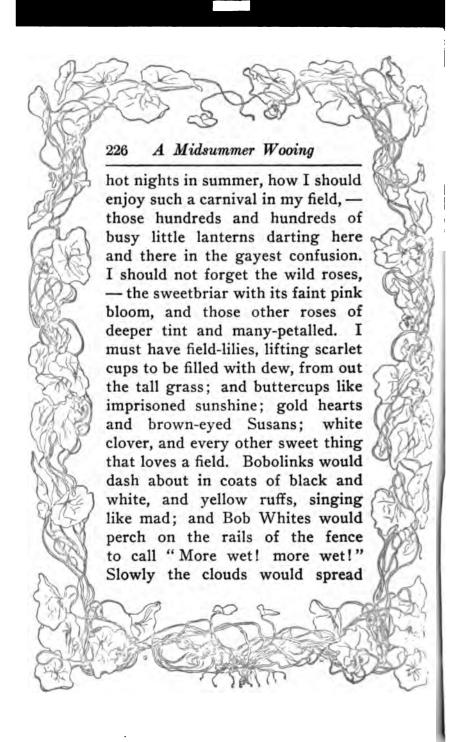
I looked beyond the field to the lane, and saw a creature quietly grazing.

It vexed me to think I could not cross the fence; for I had a fancy to lie down in the clover. I wanted, for once, to know just how such a fragrant couch would feel, and to watch for a while the great azure dome above me. How the bees would buzz around me and the butterflies flit across my face! The more I thought about it, the more I felt the presence of that bull to be a personal affront to me. Presently, I perched myself upon a

rail and sat listening to the meadow-larks calling in their sweet, long-drawn "Chaaic! chaaic!" They had nests hidden in the blos-



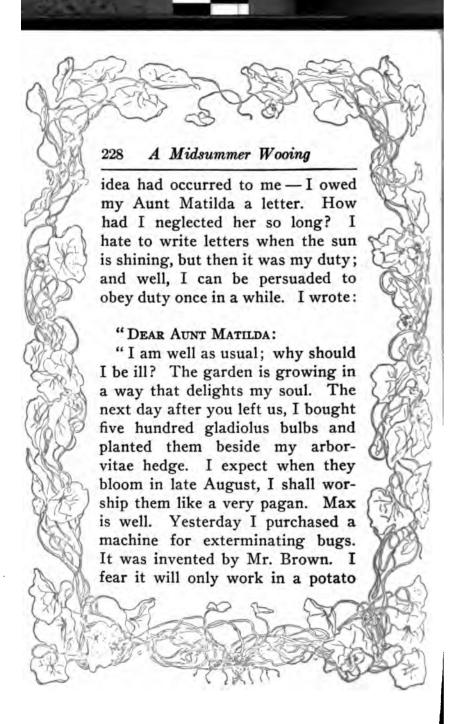
waving in festoons from the topmost rails of the fence, a prey to every gay light wind; and a wild grape-vine spreading its cool green leaves over young shrubs and climbing at last the tall slippery-elm tree in yonder corner. I love a wild grape-vine; its great leaves are so softly lined with white, and oh, how tart are the little clusters of black grapes! And raspberry bushes I must have, if only for the delicious scent on sunny days, that tells plainer than words that raspberries are ripening, and blackberries, too. How could I get along without blackberries, for, aside from the fruit, there are such dainty white clustered blooms in spring and such radiant foliage in autumn! Then fireflies love to dart through a tangle of blackberry bushes.

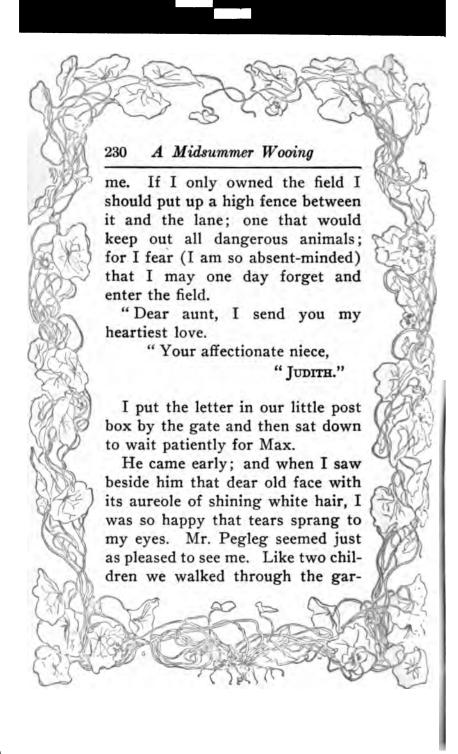


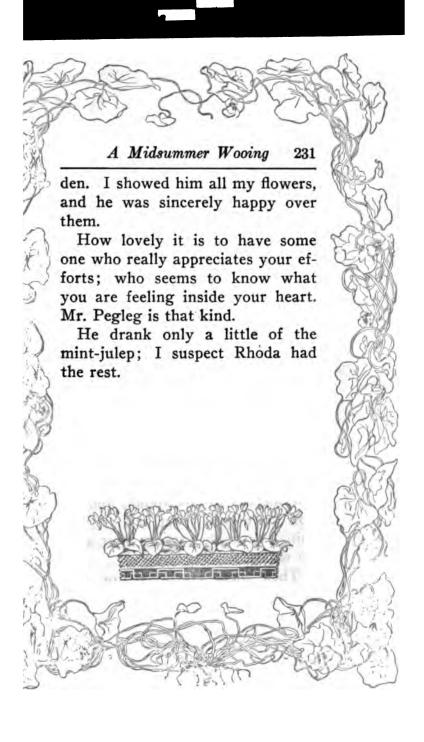
across the soft blue sky and the refreshing rain come softly down upon this bit of Paradise — my field. When it had slackened, I would go out and trail and trail through the wetness until my gown and petticoats were soaked; then return home to be scolded by Max and Rhoda. One can bear a good deal of scolding if the fun has been adequate. But that bull — that terrible bull — how dared he eat grass so quietly in yonder lane?

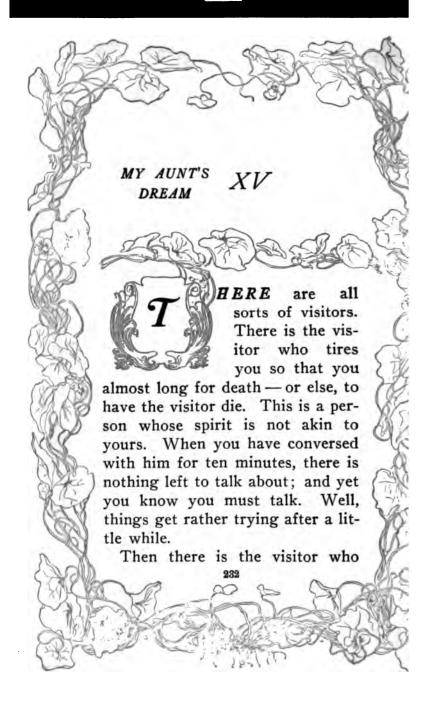
I sat for an hour or more on the rail fence and desired the field. I decided in my own mind that with such a possession added to my garden, I could better live up to my idea of a Christian life. There would be that much more space to beautify — in which to glorify God.

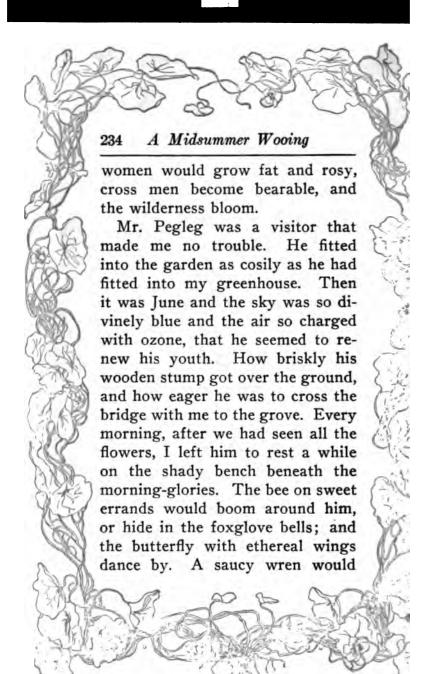
When at last I climbed down, an





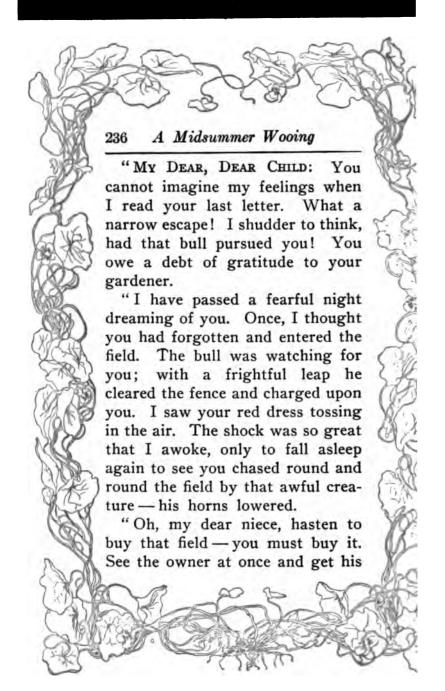






issue from the bird-house to sing his gay insouciant song, - a bit of jargon, not in the least spiritual. I would bid the dear old man goodbye, and go about my duties. One morning he asked for paper and pencil. I brought them; and often, during the long forenoon, passing and repassing, I observed him busily writing I knew not what, nor did I seek to know.

To-day Araminta came dancing toward me with a letter waving in her small black hand. I was busy clipping seed-pods from the sweet pease. When one has a long trellis to look over, why - letters are of small consequence. However, I was glad to hear from Aunt Matilda. She had received my letter and made haste to reply. She wrote:



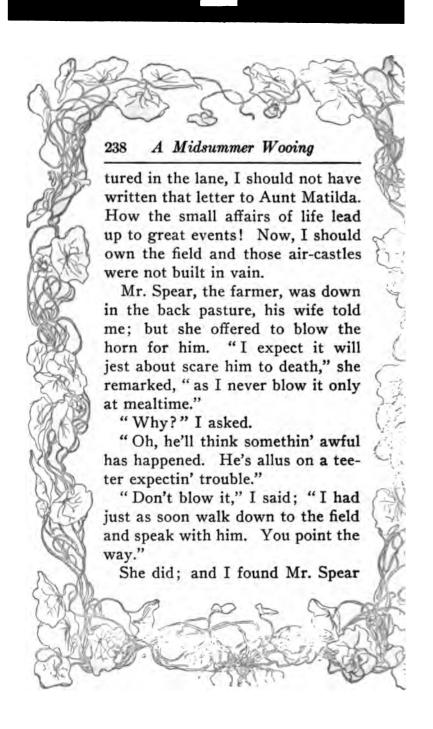
price. Your own aunt will send the money, — gladly, gladly! Then build a fence ten feet high of the strongest material; put iron pickets on top of it, so the bull cannot possibly jump over it. I shall not rest easy until I hear from you. My gout is better.

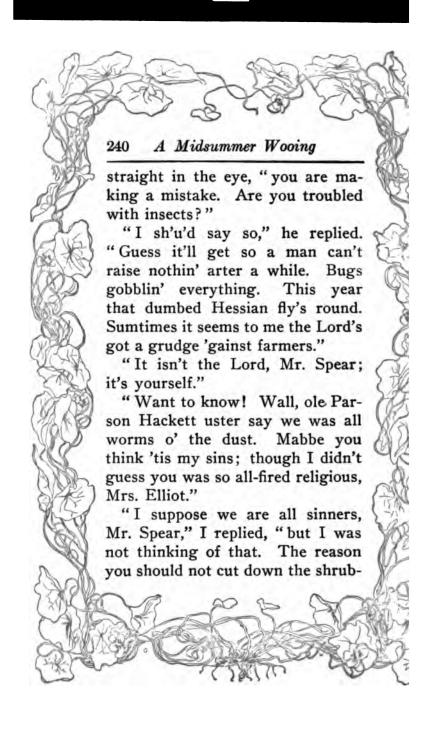
"Your loving "AUNT MATILDA."

contraction of a

It was nearly noon when I received this letter. I took a hasty lunch and started to interview the farmer who owned the field.

The day could not have been gayer. I avoided the road and took a short cut, because I like to walk in the fields. I felt very calm and satisfied. Providence had certainly been good to me. It was quite clear that had the bull never been pas-

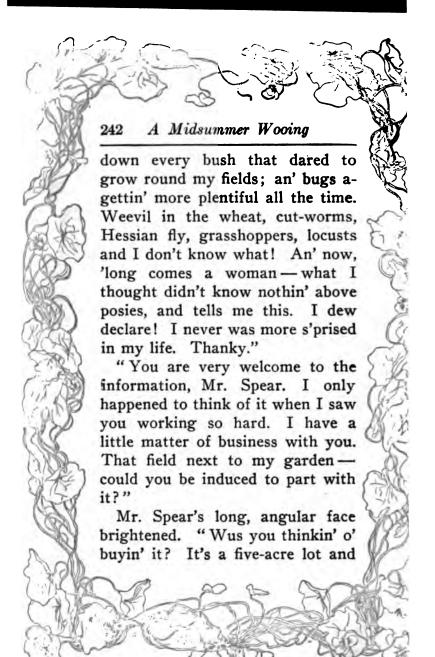


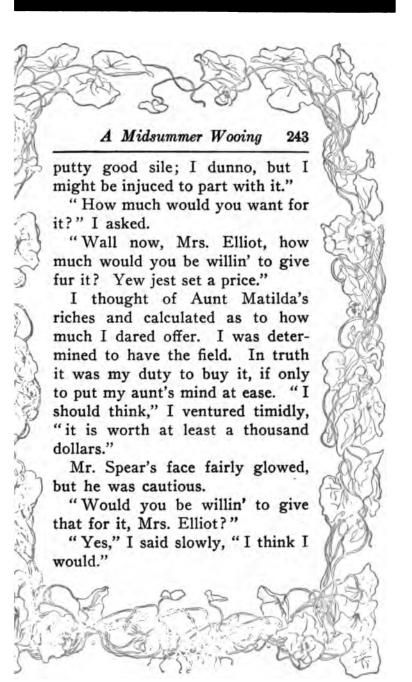


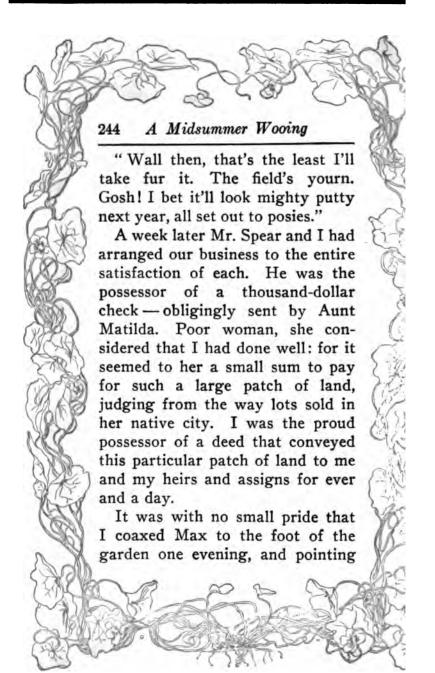
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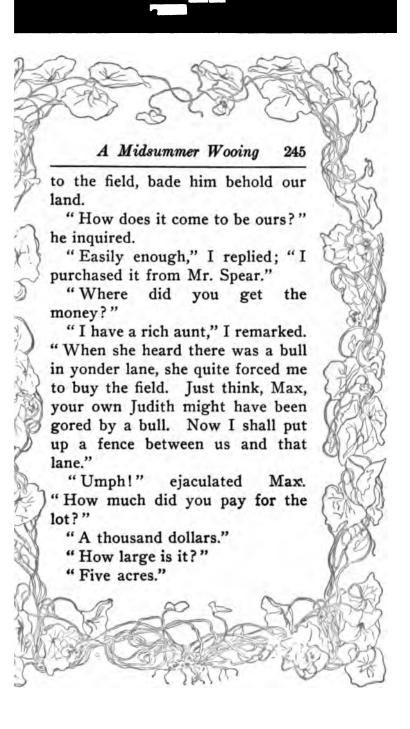
bery that borders your field is a very good one. By doing so you are aiding to increase the very pests you long to be rid of. Your trim fields make open places in which the larvae of insects delight to breed. They actually prefer the under side of a fence rail to deposit their eggs or to spin their cocoons; and with the loss of shrubbery the hot sun soon reaches them and helps them to become bugs. Again, the hedgerows about your fields are the natural homes for innumerable birds that delight to devour insects. You certainly are making a great mistake, Mr. Spear."

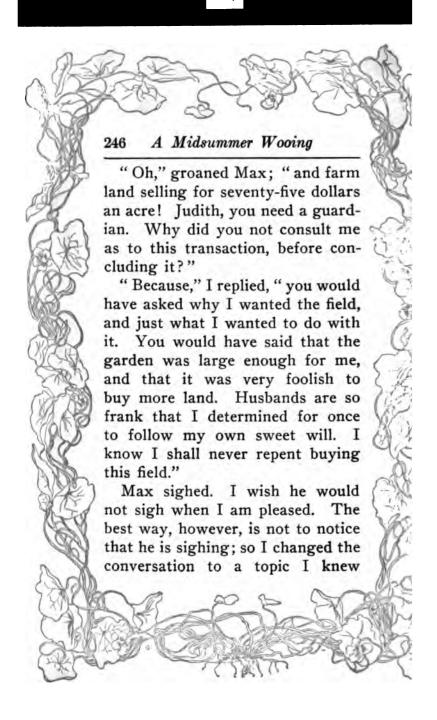
"Well, I'll be gol-dumbed!" remarked that individual, throwing down his axe. "It's live and larn! Here I've been a-breakin' my back these last three years—a-cuttin'



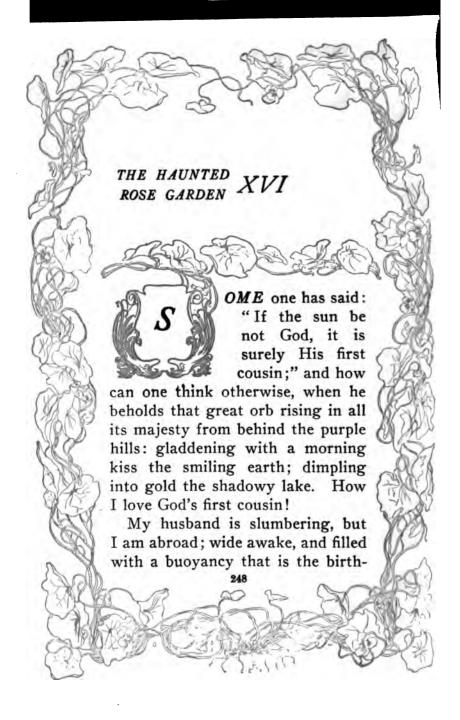




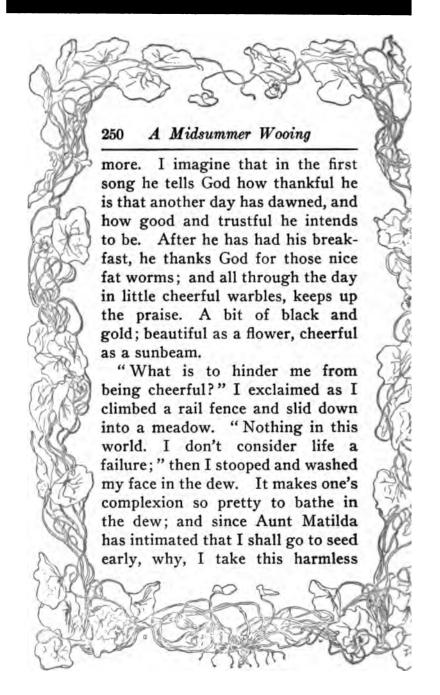








right of dawn. The dew is everywhere; tipping the little perky grass blades, hanging in shining globes on the leaves of the tall elderberry bush which brushes me as I pass. What am I seeking? Wild roses, to be sure. Have I not enough in my own garden? No, not enough; for what cultivated rose dares to equal in fragrance the wild, exquisite perfume of sweetbriar? Already the goldfinch is tilting on a tall bull-thistle; singing as if he could not praise loud enough. It is not such a bad thing to be a goldfinch; he is a bird that never gets melancholy. This is a good world for him. He gets up early in the morning, hies himself to a convenient thistle, and warbles a hearty prayer; then he hunts a few fat worms and sings some



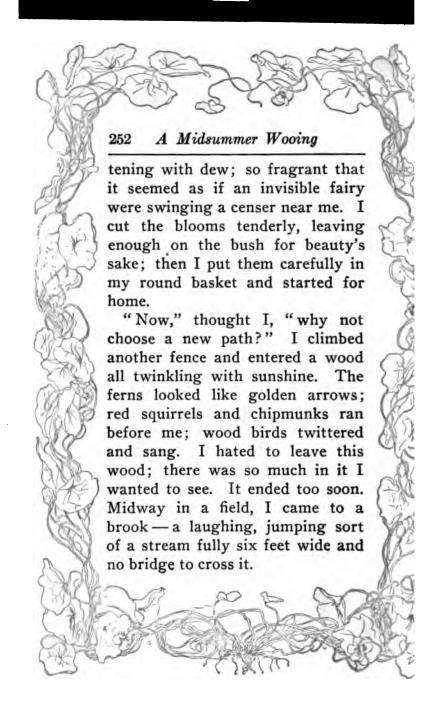
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estly think that if my aunt would get up mornings and bathe her face in the dew she would look better. What fun can there be in lying abed, computing your miseries, dwelling upon an ache here and an ache there, when you might be so happy washing your face in dew and tramping through the fields?

precaution to prevent it. I hon-

I like the meadow. The bobolinks are singing all through it and larks are rising on swift, lithe wings. I sample again its dew on my face; then I turn and look boldly at God's first cousin. His raiment has not yet grown too bright for mortal's eyes. "Behold," I said, "one woman who will enjoy herself."

At length I came across the sweetbriar, pink with bloom, glis-



There was but one thing to do, wade it. I divested myself of shoes and stockings; rolled the stockings into two hard little balls and thrust one inside each shoe. I tied the shoes together and, standing back, threw them with might and main across the brook. They landed far on the other side; then with my basket on one arm, I lifted my skirts and boldly waded in. crossed the brook in safety; then recrossed it, just for the pleasure of feeling the swift water on my feet. Crossed it again and recrossed it, laughing when I slipped on the smooth stones. It was such glorious fun that I kept it up until I began to fear God's first cousin would wilt my roses.

I reached home then, before Max was down, in time to decorate our

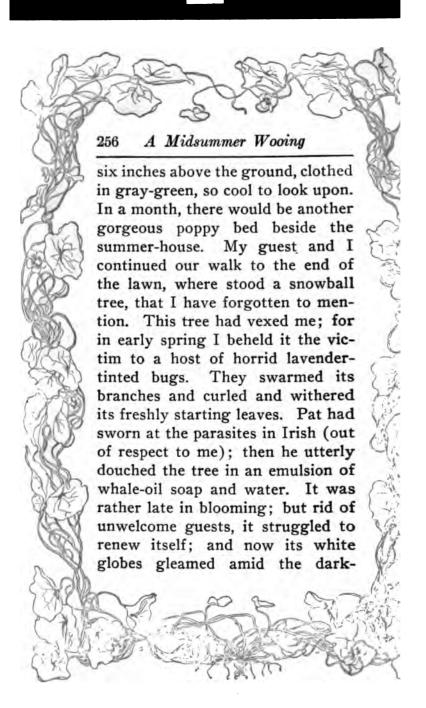
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breakfast table with my roses. I scattered them over the snowy cloth. I filled a green glass vase with them and they hung over its sloping brim in a graceful abandon.

May smiled when he beheld them.

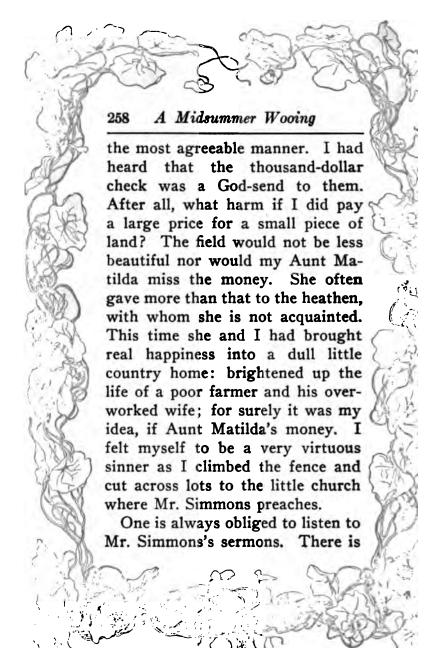
Max smiled when he beheld them. "Trophies, early wanderer?" he inquired. Mr. Pegleg raised a flower and smelled it; then he gazed at it lovingly. It always pleases me to see his appreciation of "God's kindly expressions," as he calls the roses. I know it is just this appreciation that has made his life so happy. How one ought to cultivate the art of loving things, if only for the sake of pure enjoyment.

Max is fond of Mr. Pegleg. He waits upon him more tenderly than I do. To-day he said: "It is going to be very warm, Judith. Be sure



green leaves like soft bunches of snow. I picked a branch which bore six balls and placed it in my basket, a bit of coolness amid more richly tinted flowers.

I felt idle that morning, so idle that I whiled away the time talking to my dear old friend. I confided to him my plans concerning the field I had purchased. To be truthful, I must confess that the buying of that field troubled me. I knew I had made a bad bargain; and it was not until a week or so later that I grew easy about it. This was one fine Sunday, when I met the Spear family driving to church in a nice new carriage; Mrs. Spear arrayed in a shiny black silk with a bonnet on her head that fairly cried out, "I am new!" She and her husband bowed to me in



no dropping off into a pleasant doze, and being awakened by a bumble-bee buzzing through the open window—just to taste the rose at your corsage. It has always been a fault of mine to sleep in church; but never under Mr. Simmons.

To-day, sitting in the shade of the elm, I told Mr. Pegleg about a certain sermon.

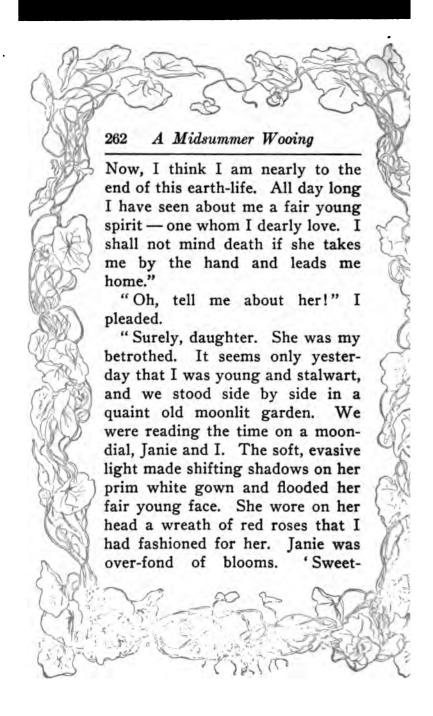
"Mr. Simmons thinks," I said, "that every one's birthright is happiness; but do you know, Mr. Pegleg, I was brought up to the belief that this world is a vale of tears. I was told not to expect happiness, but to look forward to sorrow. I have never felt pleased with the looking forward. I have such a capacity for enjoyment that I sometimes fear I am a creature without

a soul—a reincarnation of some wild, woodsy thing. If it should be so, and I must return to the earth innumerable times, why, I hope each time, for the sake of my own enjoyment, I shall grow a little wilder, a little more woodsy; for where can one find such peace and joy as in God's great out-of-doors?

"I suppose," I continued, musingly, "a soul is a very valuable possession; yet one must admit, it is a very troublesome one. It is that part of you that is always trying to escape. It runs round and round the little prison of your body and beats itself against the iron bars of circumstance. Then to think of the people who possess oversouls; those sensitive, weeping beings who go through life per-

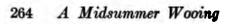
fectly miserable from beginning to end. They cannot help it, I dare say; yet, I have always felt thankful that my soul is not too vigorous for my body."

Mr. Pegleg laughed. "You have queer notions, daughter," he said; "you may be thankful that you have a good healthy out-of-door soul. It is the love for the real in life that makes one happy. Nearly all troubles are man-made. thoughts are great builders; they rear for us a palace or a hovel. we will dwell upon the dark things of life we shall behold naught but shadows, though the sun be shining just beyond. I have come a long way, daughter, but there has always been spring-time in my life; flowers have strewn my pathway. It was because I would have it so.



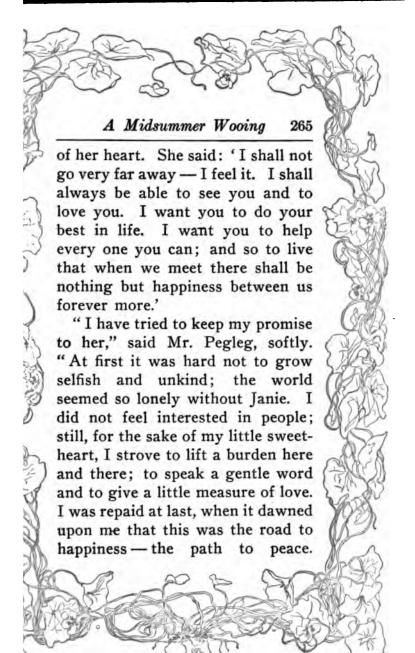
heart,' I said softly, 'I love you. Will you be my wife? See, I will wait until the shadow has crept to yonder space on the dial, for your answer.'

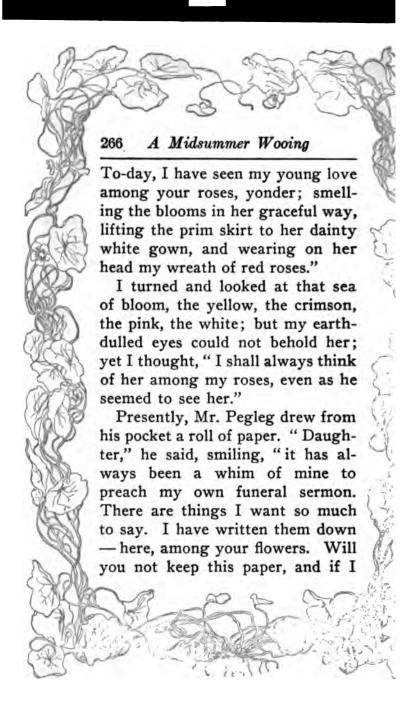
"I turned and looked down the dim garden - to give her time; still, from a corner of my eye I watched the moon-dial. I saw Janie reach out for tendrils of a honevsuckle and strip them of their leaves; then she bent above the pedestal. Finally, when I knew the shadow had surely crept across the allotted space, I turned. Janie was gone; but plainly in the moonlight I saw the tendrils laid cunningly across the dial, and they spelled one sweet word, 'Yes.' Shy Janie! I sought the garden through and through before I found her and kissed her.

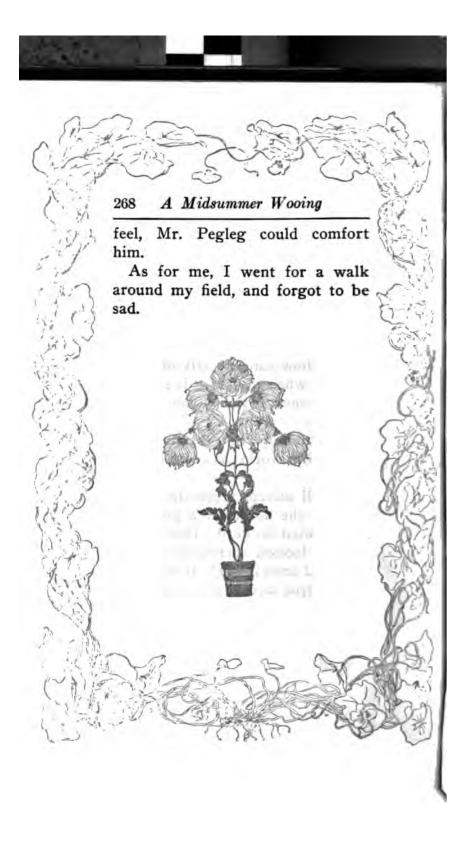


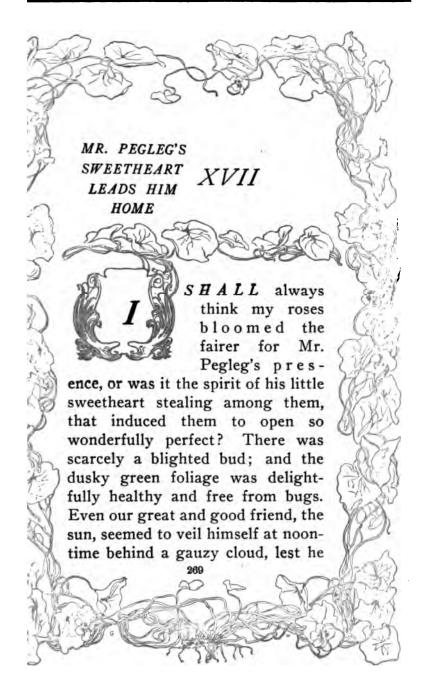
"Her father was wealthy those days; while I was but a poor boy with my mother and two little sisters to support. We could not think of marriage until I had carved my way in life. But true love makes a stout heart in a man. and I felt sure of overcoming all difficulties. An opening chanced for me in a distant city. I accepted it, kissed my little sweetheart goodbye, bidding her have good cheer and to wait for me. Late that winter I received a letter from her father. He wrote: 'Janie is ill. She wishes to see you. Come at once.'

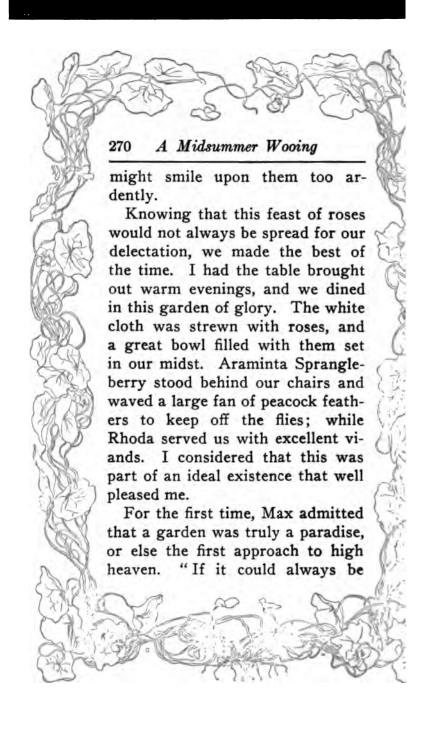
"I got leave of absence and went. I found my little sweetheart a victim to quick consumption. For a week I sat every day beside her bed, and she told me the thoughts

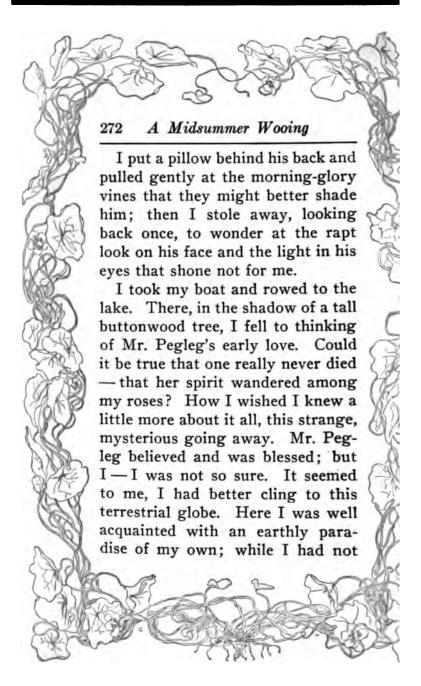






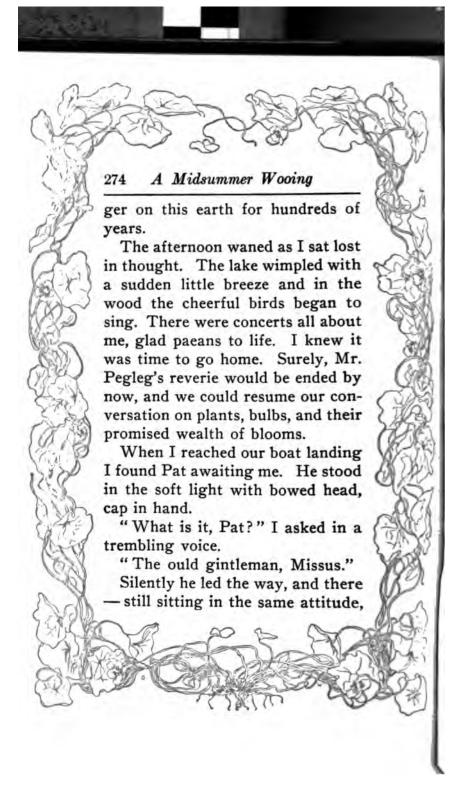






even a bowing acquaintance with that mystical beyond. In a welltimed prayer, I asked the Lord that he would stretch out my years as long as possible; "for," I argued, "I am truly fond of the earth. love everything that goes to make peace in the heart; the flowers, the trees, the vegetables, the birds, the sky, and the stirring waters; the good brown soil and all the animals; - man included," I added as an afterthought. "Oh, yes, I love my fellow-man; but I am not quite so much interested in him as I am in nature."

I often think it may be wrong, this fondness for living, but how can I help it? I feel so well and hearty, so green and bushy-like, so in love with every smile of Nature, that - well - I wish I might lin-



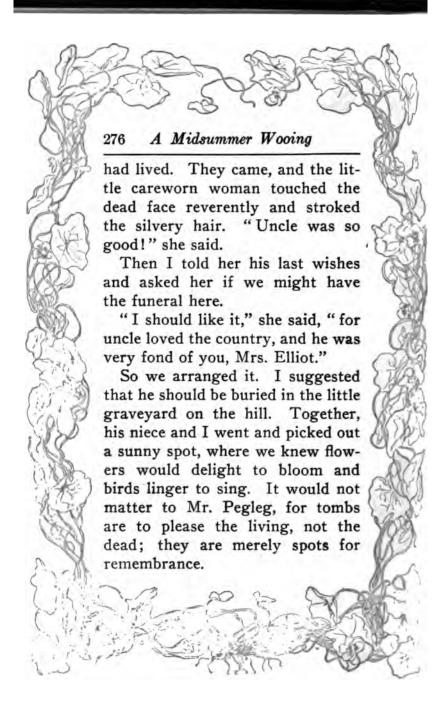
with that rapt look upon his face — was my dear old friend; mine no longer, for his early love, she whom he had seen among the roses, had taken him by the hand and led him home.

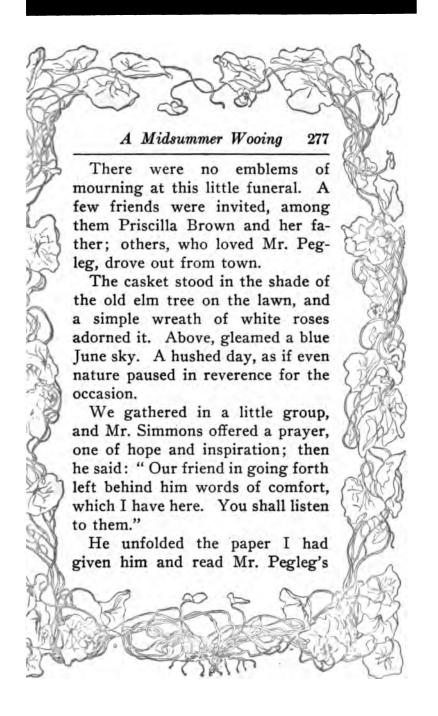
Pat crossed himself reverently, and his lips moved in prayer; but I—I could not weep. There was a hard lump in my throat which threatened to choke me. I covered my face with my hands and sank to the ground.

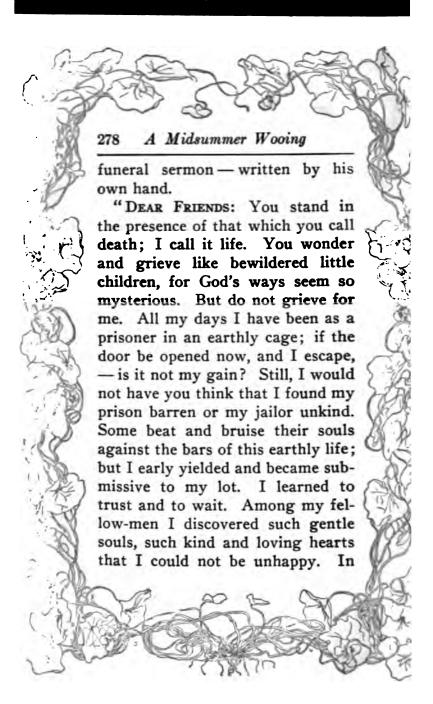
When I recovered, Max was

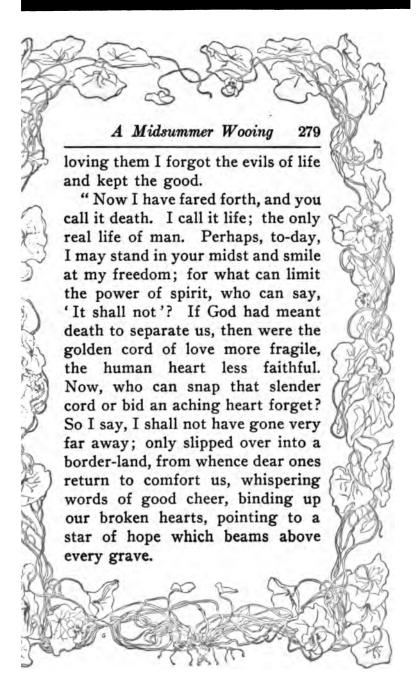
bending over me. "My poor little girl," he said, "what a dreadful shock!" My tears began to flow and I wept softly and long; not for Mr. Pegleg, but for my own loss.

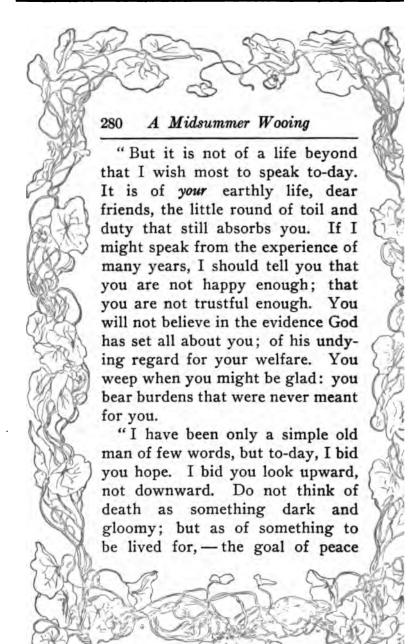
We sent for the niece and her husband, with whom Mr. Pegleg

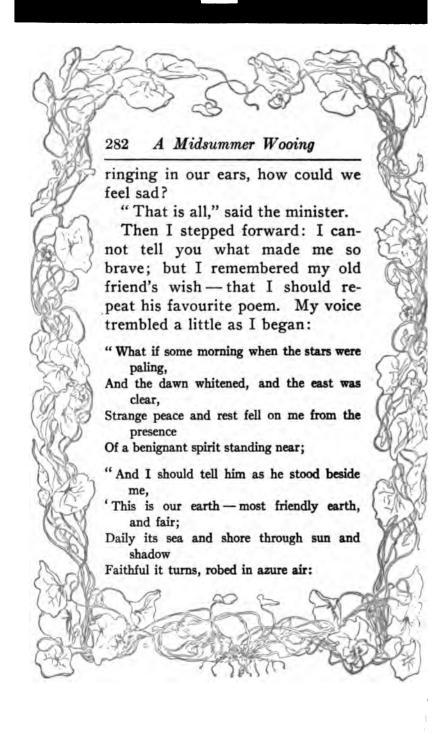












"'There is blest living here, loving and serving,
And quest of truth, and serene friendships

But stay not, spirit, earth has one destroyer—

His name is Death: flee, lest he find thee here!'

"And what if then, while the still morning brightened, And freshened in the elm the summer's

breath,
Should gravely smile on me the gentle angel,

And take my hand and say, 'My name is Death.'"

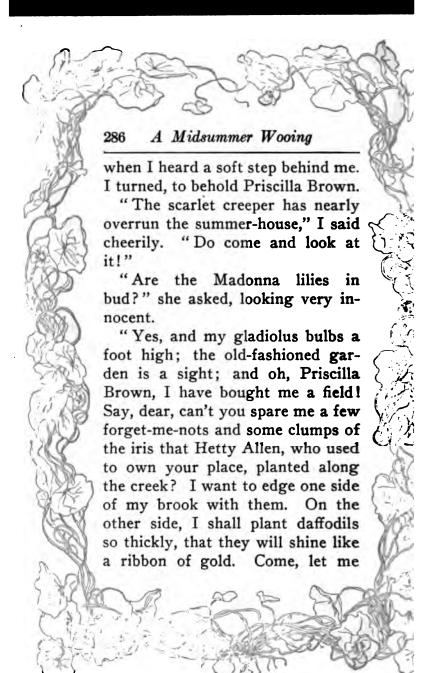
Silently we bore him away, and laid him in the little graveyard. The only words spoken above that disturbed mound of earth were these glad, jubilant words:

"O Death, where is thy sting; O Grave, where is thy victory!"



earth who loves a garden in such a hearty fashion! How I wish she might behold this perfect spot." Perhaps his little sweetheart will answer, "Nay, she would grow mad with joy. Her soul has not grown up to our garden; she must wait a while." And I - why, I am quite content to wait.

So I think, as I pick a great basket of roses - my own roses this year, growing on my own bushes; there is such a satisfaction in feeling that I own the bush. Last year they were my roses growing on Tom Norton's bushes. I shall always think that Mr. Norton made a sacrifice in selling this place. He gave up a paradise to a modern Eve. But the modern Eve appreciates her paradise. My basket was just running over,



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I thought Priscilla looked rather pale.

"Is anything the matter, dear?"
I asked.

"No," she said doubtfully; "nothing much. I am only a little troubled."

"About the hens?"

"Oh, no, the hens are thriving; it is father. You see, he has so nearly completed his aeroplane, that he thinks of taking a trip in it next week. Of course, I feel sure that it is all right, and nothing could happen, but —"

I appreciated that "but." Poor Priscilla! "He will not sail far?" I said. "And do urge him to fly low."

"No, only just around our big lot. He will be very careful at first, then if it works well, why, he will

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take longer trips. I feel that he is going to succeed," and her eyes brightened.

I kept Priscilla to lunch, and by talking judiciously about Donald Warren, sought to turn her mind from air-ships. Rhoda set the table on the porch and served us with cold jellied chicken, broiled chops, delicious coffee, and strawberries with cream. Araminta Sprangleberry pirouetted behind us with an asparagus bough, having mislaid her peacock-feather fan.

Did you ever taste strawberries that were picked at just the right hour? Rhoda claims "Dey ain't no good when de sun smuts 'em;" so she rises early in the morning and picks them while the dew is still glistening on their leaves. Then she puts them away in the cool, dark cellar and they come to the table fresh and firm; truly, God's greatest triumph in berry-making.

Priscilla and I ate, each, a large dish of these strawberries, then we helped ourselves afresh; for, as I wisely commented, "Strawberries last such a short time that one ought to make the most of them."

In the meanwhile Priscilla Brown told me about her mother.

"I was only five years old," she said, "when mother died; but I can see her yet, — so plainly! Father used to take me to the theatre where she acted. Often, she would look so beautiful, when she came upon the stage, that the people would applaud her like mad; but she used only to notice father and me.

"Sometimes I was allowed in her

dressing-room, back of the stage. If she had a little time to spare, after being robed, she would always take me upon her lap and sing to me or pet me. I was so dazzled by her beauty, that I used to wonder

instead of a real mother.

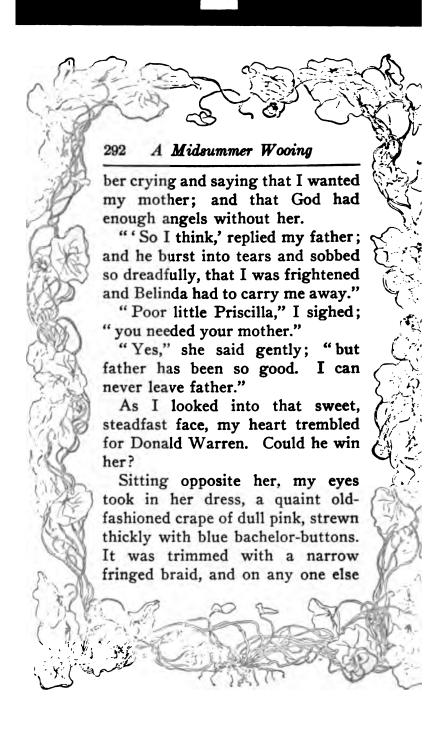
"She took cold one winter night, playing on a draughty stage, and for days was very, very ill. One

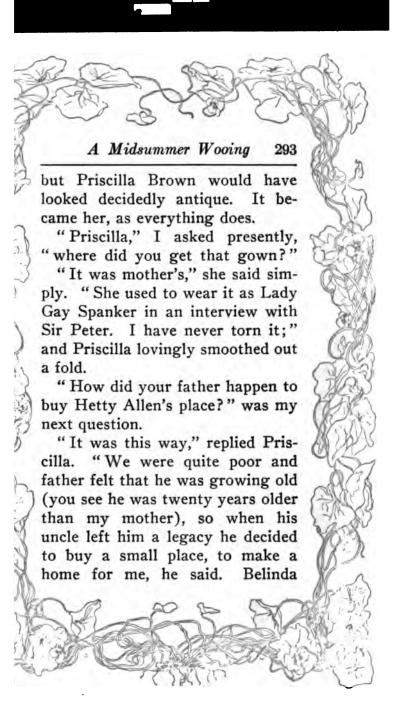
if, after all, she were not an angel

evening they brought me to her bedside. She looked at me mournfully out of her great bright eyes; then she drew me to her and held me close. 'Little daughter,' she

whispered, 'you must stay and comfort father; but oh, it is hard, so hard to leave you!'

"Next morning father told me she had gone away in the night to be one of God's angels. I remem-







wanted it to be in the country, where she could raise hens and have a garden; and father thought he should like the quiet. When he heard of this place he came and bought it. That was six years ago."

We arose, and Priscilla said she must be going; for Belinda wished her to do an errand. She had asked Priscilla to purchase some butter from Mrs. Sullivan.

"If you will wait a few minutes," I said, "I will walk along with you.

I was intending to pay a visit to my little neighbour on the crossroad, beyond Mrs. Sullivan's. I

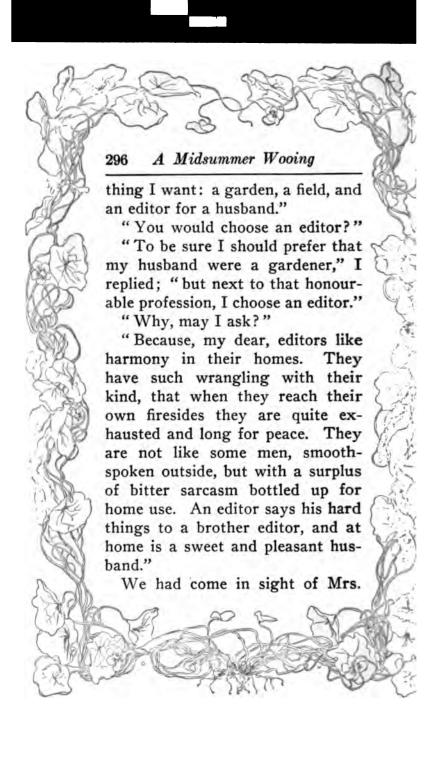
have not seen her in a long time and this morning I picked her a basket of roses."

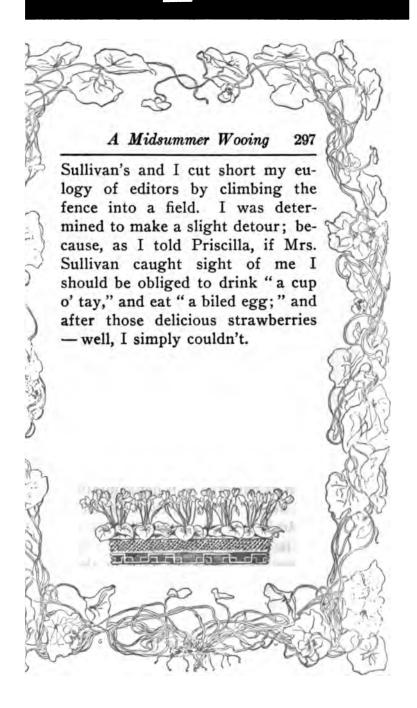
I hurried in for my straw hat and the flowers, which I had placed in the cold cellar. Telling Rhoda where I was going, I set out with Priscilla.

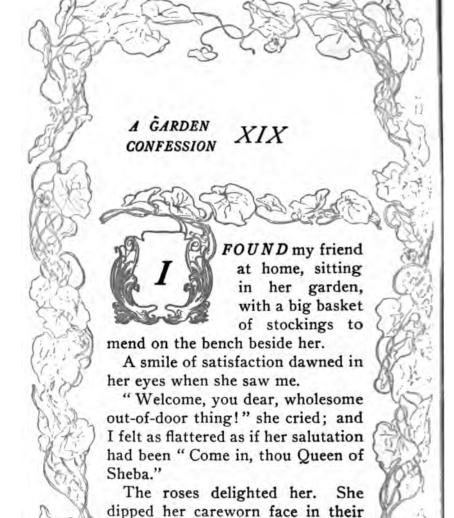
As we walked along I was feeling comfortably cheery. Presently Priscilla Brown said to me:

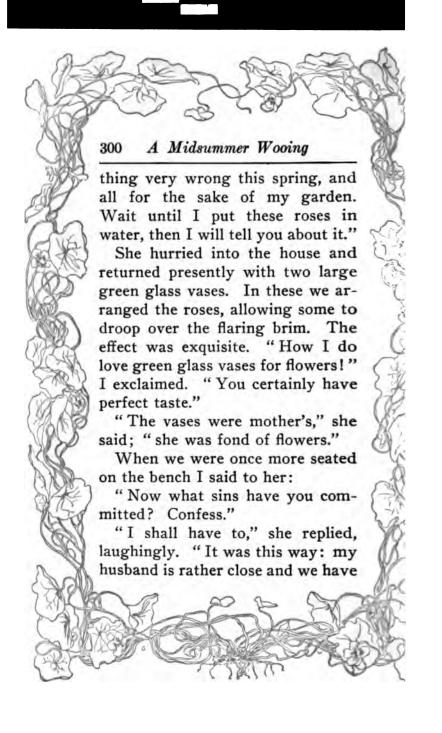
"Mrs. Elliot, you are the happiest woman I ever knew. I wish you would tell me how to be so happy."

I expressed surprise. "It is easy enough," I said. "Just love everything you see, and never think about evil. I imagine all gardeners are happy. It is the good out-of-door life and the pleasure of watching green things grow. I don't know how to be low-spirited. I think, my dear, I am a little like bottled champagne—just waiting for the cork to be drawn to fizz and bubble over; then I have every-







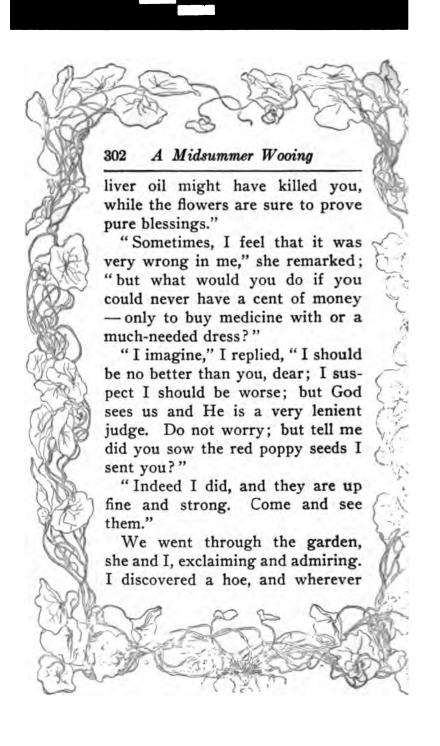


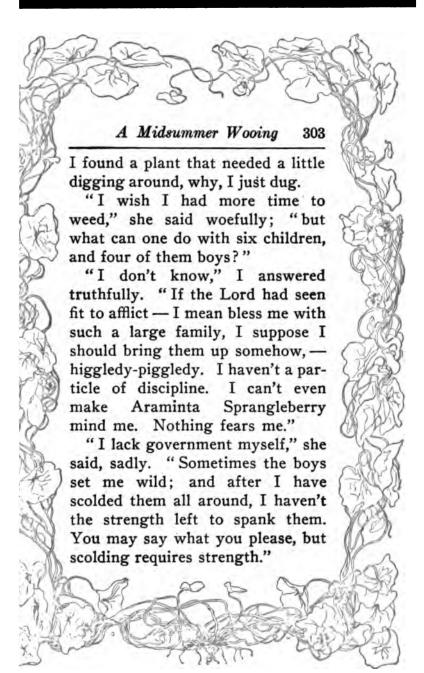
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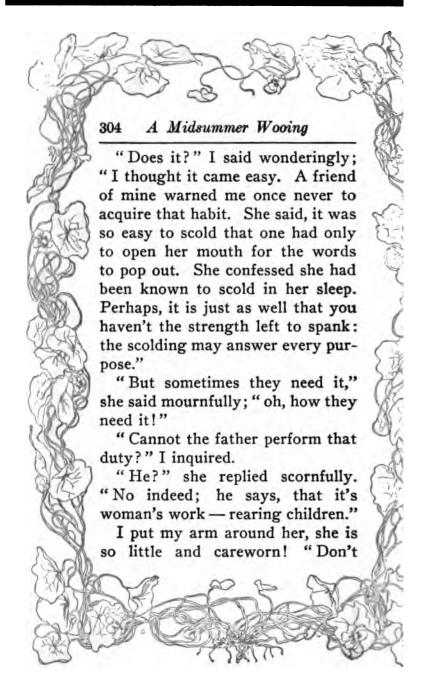
little ready money, but, as I generally have a cough every spring, he gives me a dollar to buy cod-liver oil; then he watches every day to see that I take it. I know he loves me.

"This spring I deceived him. I took my last year's empty bottle and filled it with molasses; then I added to it a good pinch of soda. When you shook up the bottle you couldn't tell the mixture from codliver emulsion. I took a teaspoonful of this three times a day and kept the dollar to buy flower seeds. You see I did so want the seeds. Was it very wicked?"

I did not reply for a moment, I was so stirred with the pity of it. At last I said: "Of course, it was not exactly an orthodox proceeding; but on the other hand, the cod-

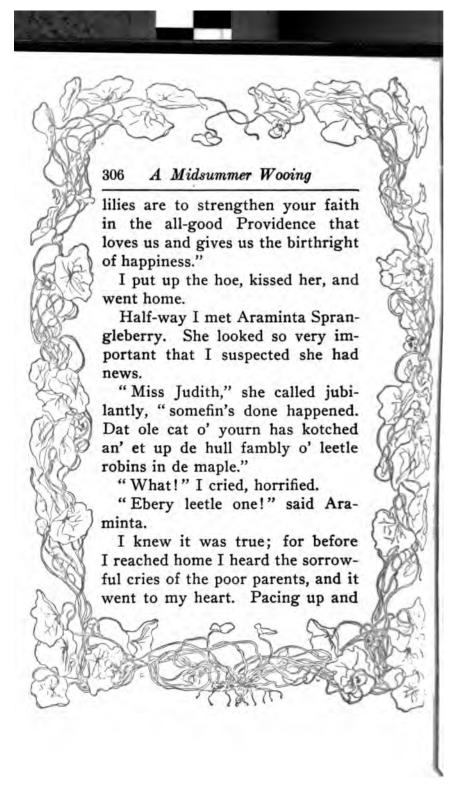




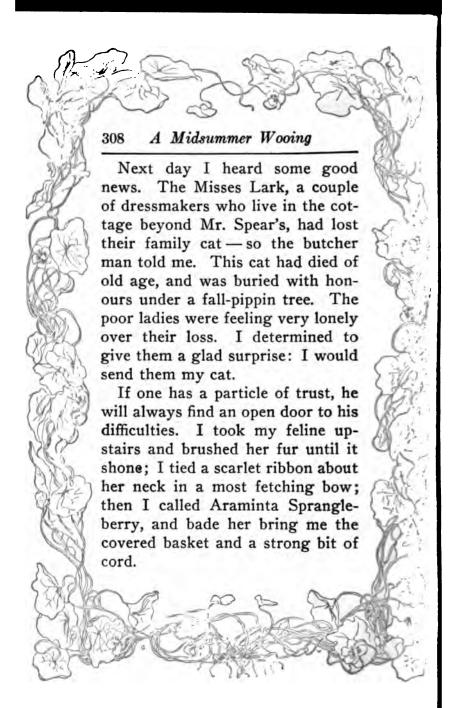


worry, dear," I said; "come, take a lesson from your garden. plants don't need to be disciplined; they are God's children. Perhaps, if you trusted God in regard to your little humans, and scolded less, He would keep an eye on them. once knew a careless, trusting mother who worried very little over her brood. She said God's angels looked after them; and it did seem as if those children never got a fall or stubbed a toe. I don't believe worrying or scolding helps a bit; but trusting takes our burdens away and lets us draw a free breath of pure happiness."

Then I dug around some pansy roots. "This fall," I said, "I shall send you some bulbs — Madonna lilies and tulips. The tulips are to cheer you up in the spring, and the



her away.



We had some difficulty in persuading the cat to lie still in the basket. She was preternaturally bright, and scented something wrong. I was forced to box her ears; but at last I succeeded in getting the cover down, and securely fastened with a stout twine. Then

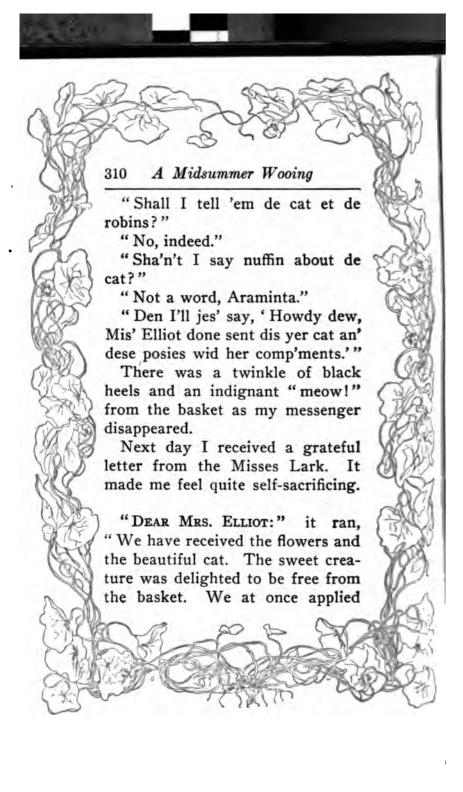
I put the basket in one of Araminta's moist black hands, and in the other a generous bunch of roses.

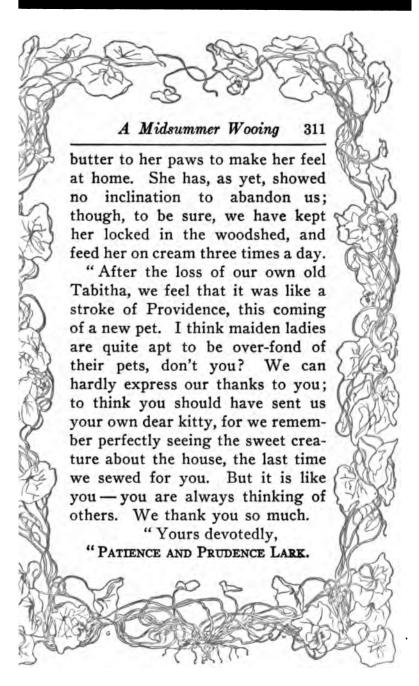
"Now," I said, "run across the fields as far as Mr. Spear's house; then by the road, just beyond, you

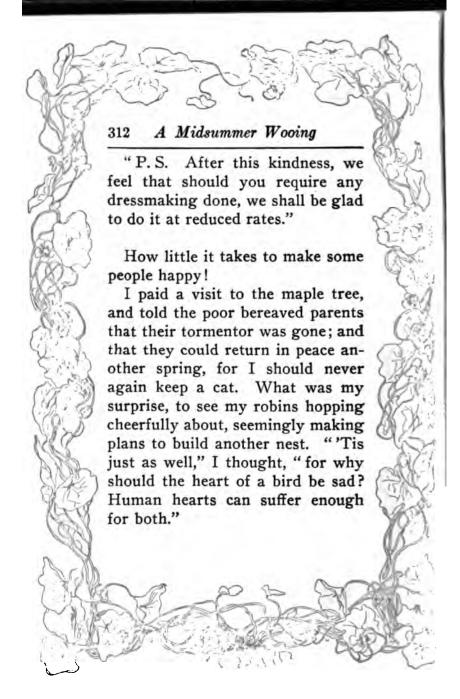
will see a little cottage painted white with green blinds. The Misses Lark live there."

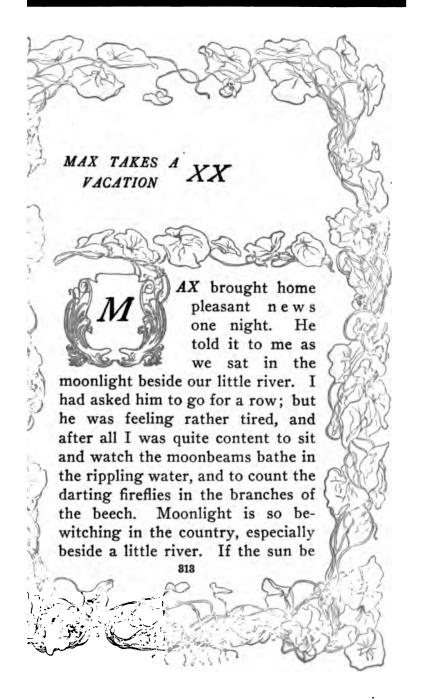
"Birds?" inquired Araminta.

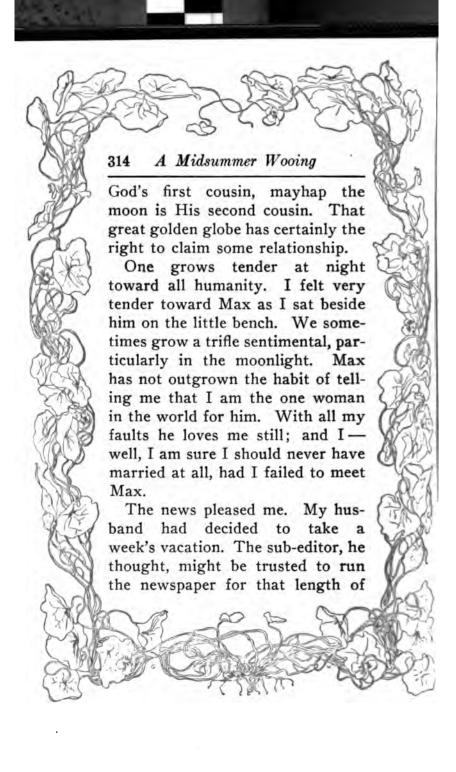
"No, ladies. Knock at the door, and when it is opened, say Mrs. Elliot sent the basket and the roses with her compliments."

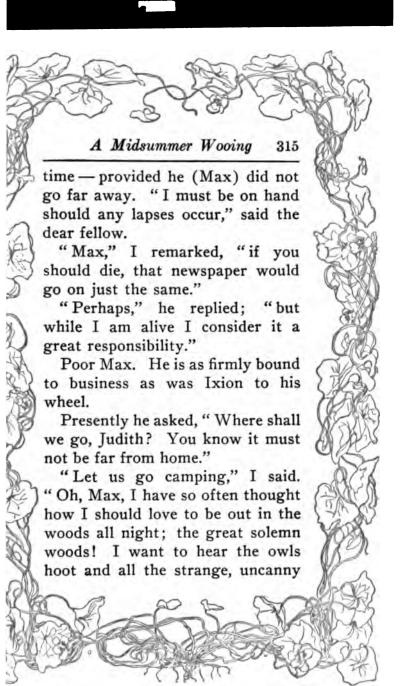


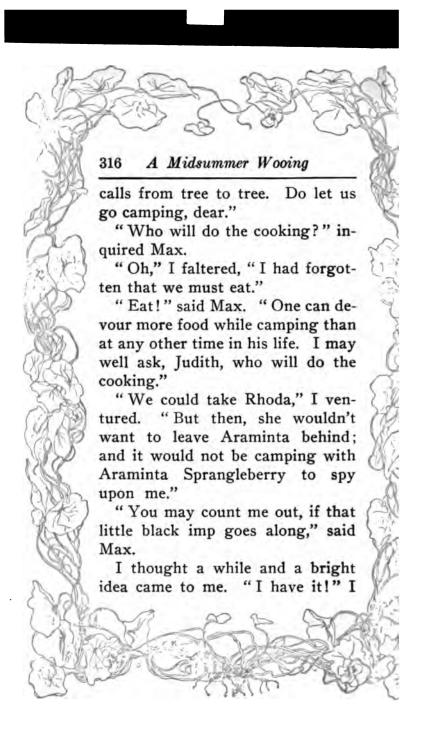












exclaimed forcibly: "We need not go far from home. We will camp in the woods on the south side of the lake. There isn't a lovelier spot in the world. Then Rhoda can cook our meals at home and send them to us by Araminta. Max, I have made up my mind; you must buy a tent to-morrow."

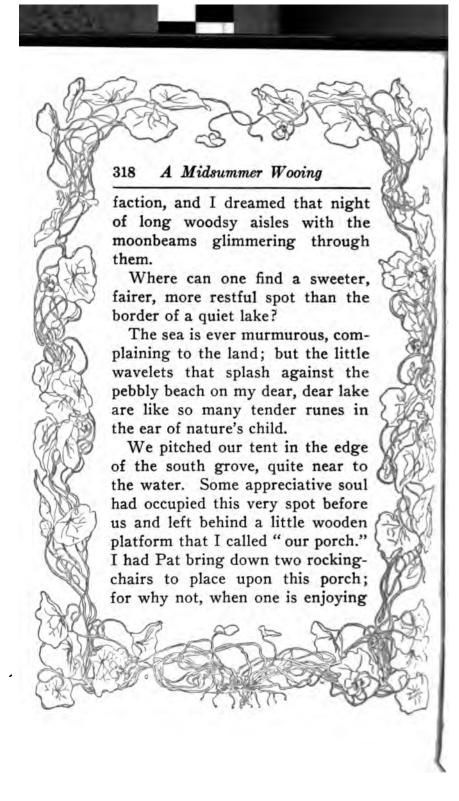
He laughed. "Then we shall spend our vacation not a mile from home?"

"It will be so convenient," I said.

"If the Madonna lilies should come out, Pat can easily send me word. I wouldn't miss seeing those lilies bloom."

"And if the sub-editor fakes, I can easily slip into town," said Max. "Judith, you are a far-seeing little woman."

So it was arranged to our satis-



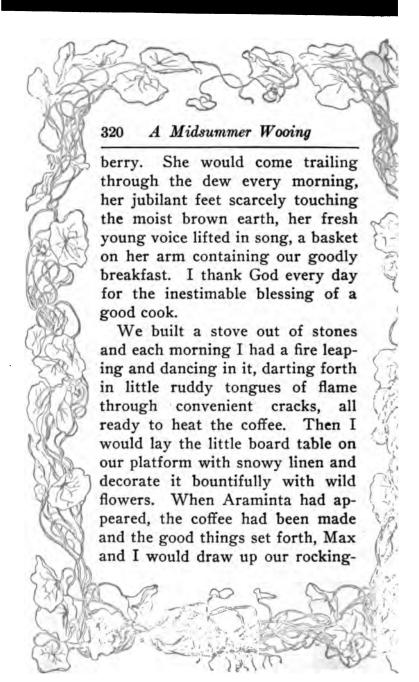


himself, be comfortable as well as happy?

Max demurred a little at my arrangements. He thought we should have a rainy week; but I felt very sure that not a drop of rain would fall. There was a sort of steadfast good-weather look to the sky that reassured me.

It was my first experience in camping out. I had wanted to camp out often enough, but some one always opposed me. The only thing that reconciles me to growing old is that I shall get my way oftener.

Now, it was my own sweet will for one solid week to enjoy a sylvan life. I should have no care, for Rhoda was to prepare our food. It would be brought to us by the saucy, bright - eyed Araminta Sprangle-



chairs and eat and rock, and rock and eat.

I told Max it reminded me of Mr. Watts's lovely hymn, which runs something like this:

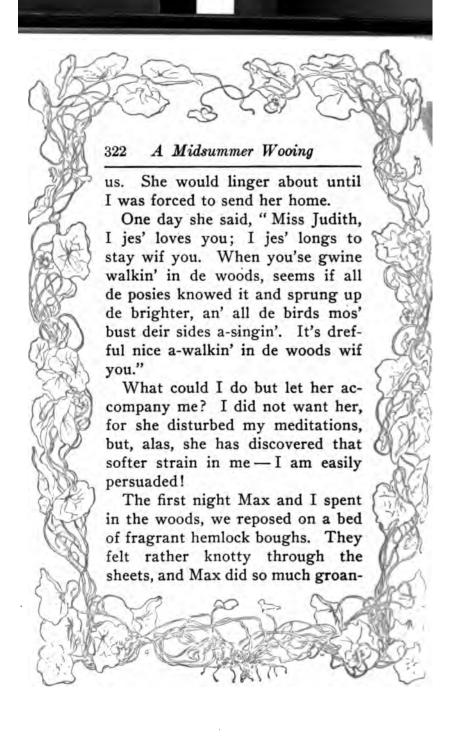
"Here, will I sit and sing" (I substituted rock) "myself away to everlasting bliss."

Araminta always watched us with hungry eyes, anxiously hoping we would leave a few morsels for her. Sometimes it was hard to deny myself, but I respected that mute wish. I would not ask Max to go hungry; but I could curb my own appetite.

"We'se ain't hab nuffin good to eat up to de house," said Araminta; "Aunt Rhody she say brack folks

don' need much."

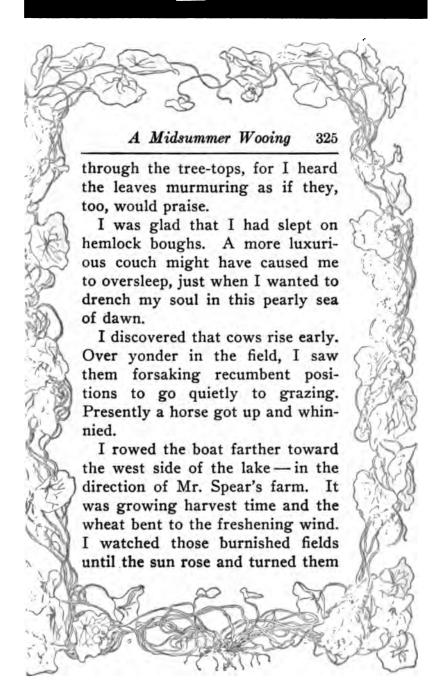
Araminta always hated to leave

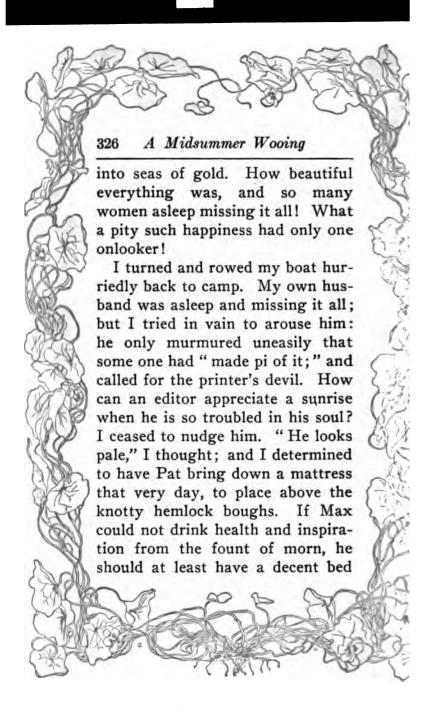




sifting through the flap of the tent; and outside, soft and clear, like molten melody, sounded the notes of the wood-thrush, welcoming and blessing the coming day. Down the long aisles of the wood came answering notes, sweet and distant; and presently, it seemed as if the whole grove were filled with music. I arose and made a quick toilet.

The lake was still gray when I launched my boat upon it; but suddenly it began to twinkle, and vague little lines of light shot over it. Yonder, near the rushes, ghost-like wisps of mist lifted and stole quickly away. A loon laughed, and through the dimness a crane rose, trailing his long black legs behind him, flying westward. It was morning, but not yet sunrise. A gay little wind kept frisking



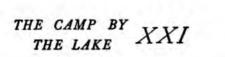


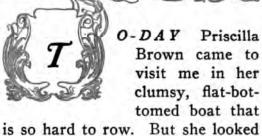
to lie on. I kissed him and let him sleep.

When he awoke at eight o'clock, the fire was burning merrily in the stove; the table was laid and strewn with wild flowers; the aroma of coffee filled the air. Araminta and I were only waiting to serve the good breakfast cooked by the valuable and steadfast Rhoda. If I speak too often of my cook, it is because I so understand her value.

Max ran down to our little dock and dipped his head in the lake, shaking the shining drops from his hair, exactly as a shaggy dog shakes himself; then he returned happy and free from care. In the pleasant wood, with the sunshine falling chastely through the leaves and the cheerful birds singing all about us, we seated ourselves in our

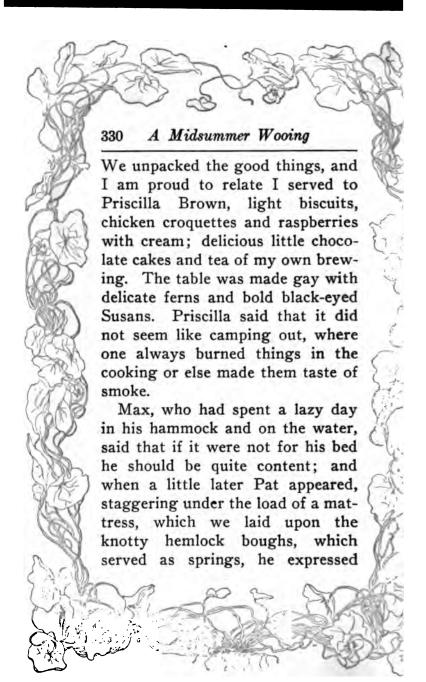


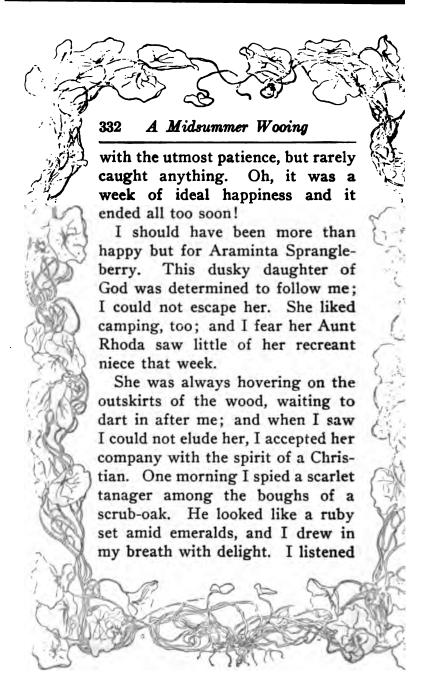




is so hard to row. But she looked like a picture in her light gown and leghorn hat, weighted down with roses. Her cheeks were all aglow from the exertion of rowing.

She was greatly interested in our camp and I invited her to stay to supper. At precisely six o'clock came Araminta with the two baskets hanging from her slender arms.





to hear him sing; but it was not the sweet melody of more modestly robed birds. He sang well enough for a scarlet tanager, that after all is fashioned but to shine before his fellow birds. I was very still, watching him intently, when Araminta happened along and scared him away. Another day, I was observing the wood-pewee, a very shy bird, when all was spoiled by Miss Sprangleberry twittering, found you, Missus." How I did wish I might get lost

from Araminta!

One day, as we sat upon opposite logs in the woods, she said: "Miss Judith, aren't you glad you'se ain't brack?"

I confessed I was glad.

"I'se don't like God one bit," said Araminta, "'cause he made me

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brack. I'se don' wanter be no niggah."

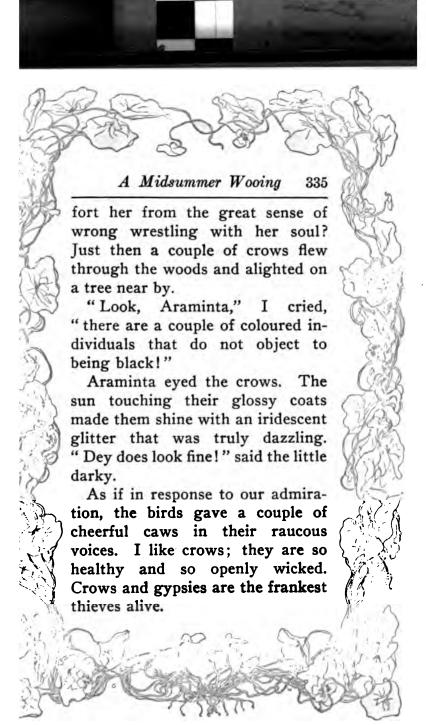
"Araminta," I remarked, solemnly, "you can't help yourself; God doesn't ask us what we want to be; He just fashions us to suit Himself."

"Dat's true, Miss Judith," she returned; "but I'se jes' got a grudge 'gin God," and she dug her bare toes fiercely into a convenient mound of moss.

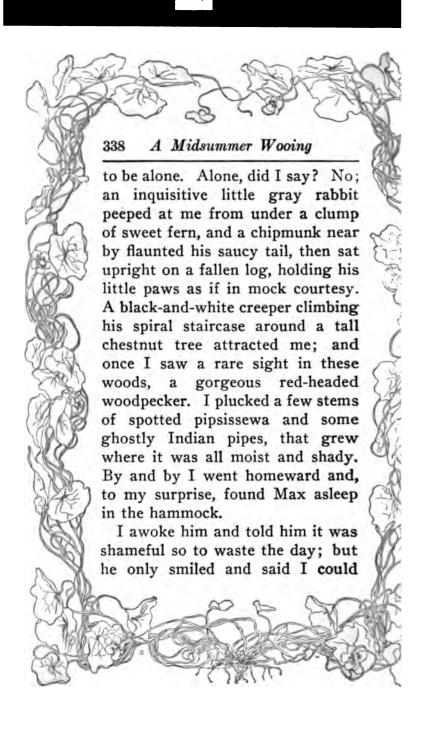
"Why, Araminta," I said reproachfully, "I thought you had religion?"

"Oh, I'se got 'ligion fast enuf, Miss Judith. I'se bin on de monah's binch. You see, I'se jes' got to hab 'ligion or de debbil'll kotch me."

Poor child! I did not know what to say to her. How could I com-





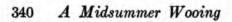


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enjoy enough for two; and I believe he is right.

Some people, I have heard, do not dare to enjoy themselves for fear of suffering. They argue, that one extreme follows another; and so they repress the natural wellsprings of joy, only letting a little trickle forth now and then in a most cautious manner. If they find they are beginning to have a good time, they immediately turn their thoughts to the tomb or to something equally as solemn. For my part, when I think of the tomb, I always infer that I need a tonic or a brisk walk in the open air. The dear, faithful earth is surely planned for man's enjoyment; so why should one die a thousand deaths in anticipation, when just one will

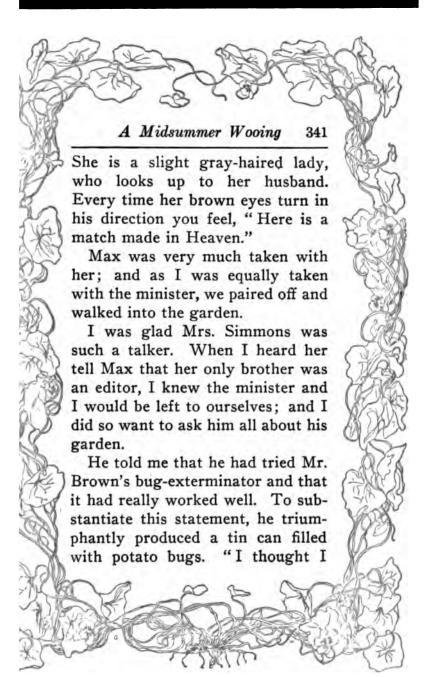
suffice? This is a sermon that costs

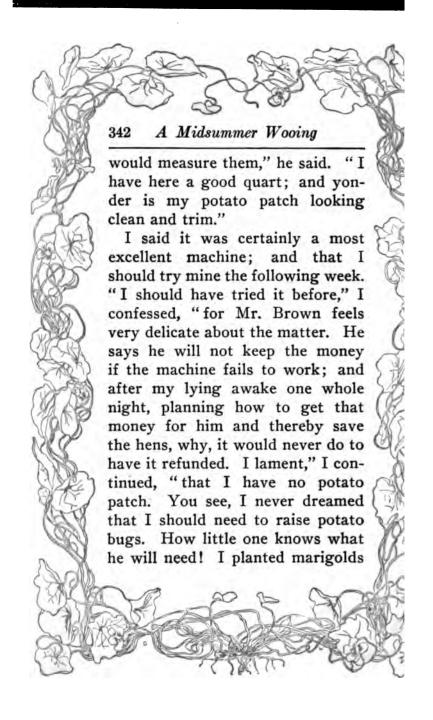


nothing, but is very profitable to the soul.

Speaking of sermons reminds me of Mr. Simmons. I coaxed Max to go with me that very afternoon to visit the "New Eden." He rebelled a little, for editors and ministers are not always congenial. However, I am of such a persistent nature that it is hard for Max to deny me. He declares that it is far easier to yield; so, presently, we were walking across the fields in the direction of the minister's home.

We found a little old-fashioned farmhouse, but very quaint and cozy inside. Mrs. Simmons is truly a genius. Her rooms are hung with chintz of dainty patterns; there are broad window-seats piled with silk pillows, and lamps with gorgeous shades standing on little tables.





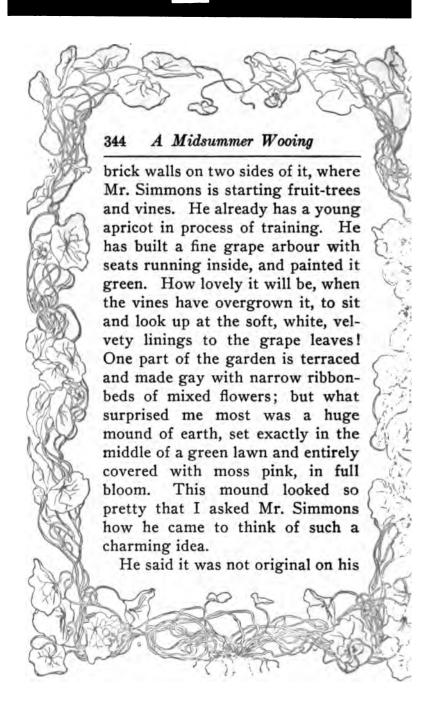
A Midsummer Wooing

instead of tubers in my kitchen garden. I set the plants between the rows of cabbages, as I wished to see how they would look in the early fall - pretty goldenly, don't you think? Then, we haven't many bugs of any kind this year, owing to early industry on the part of Pat and myself: however, my neighbour, Mrs. Sullivan, has quite a sizable potato patch. I have thought of asking permission to gather her bugs; anyhow, I must something before Priscilla do

Mr. Simmons thought it would be just the plan to ask Mrs. Sullivan; and then we fell to discussing his garden. It is really a most satisfactory garden. There are high

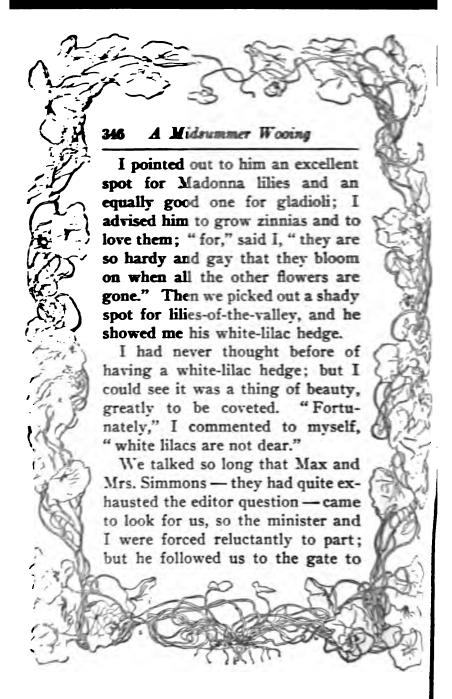
Brown visits me again; for I have promised to send word to her

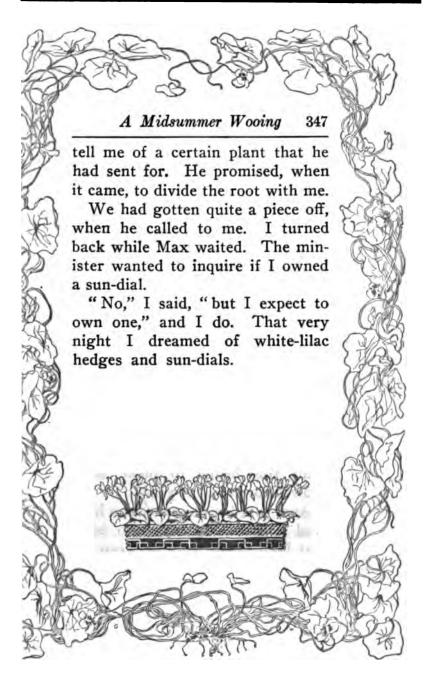
father."

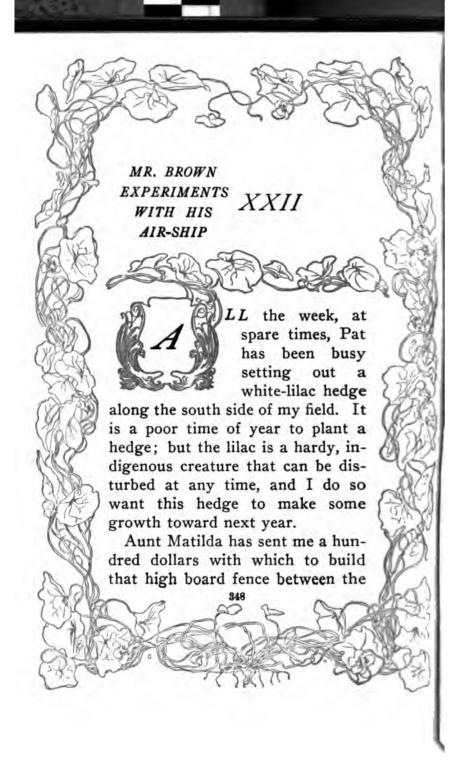


part; that there used to be just such a mound in his grandfather's garden in their old home in Virginia. "We children used to think there was an Indian buried in it, and once I started to dig it up, but did not get far when grandmother discovered me. I have always remembered that mound and wanted one just like it," he continued.

Mr. Simmons told me that he did not care for a garden that was dug up every spring and made over. He said he had invited his flowers to come and stay. He thought perhaps, he should purchase the place, and every year he desired his old friends to smile up at him from the brown earth; to whisper, "We are here again." "I like," he concluded, "sweet confusion, and not dull precision."

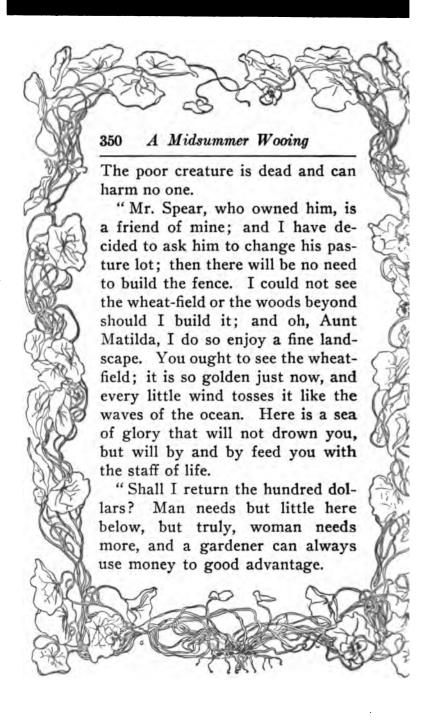




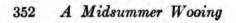


field and the lane. Her terror concerning the bull is truly pathetic. I can almost feel sorry that I wrote to her about him. I hate to build the fence, for it will cut off such a pretty view of the fields and the woods beyond; still, I suppose I must do it. I was just thinking this over, when Pat came and told me that the bull was dead. They found the poor animal, he explained, in a little hollow with his leg broken. Nobody knows how he broke his leg; but Mr. Spear had to shoot him. Now Aunt Matilda need not longer worry. Of course, I must write at once and set her mind at ease.

"You need no longer lie awake nights thinking about that bull.



A Midsummer Wooing "I hope you are better of the gout, dear Aunt. I often think of you. How I wish you could hoe and dig as well as I can. Max and I have been camping for a whole week, just down by the lake. He needed a change. We should have gone farther away, but for the cooking. Max considered that so important. He dared not trust me to do it, for fear of slow starvation. Of course, I can cook; but I have no special talent for it as I have for gardening. Rhoda cooked our food for us at home - over our own cook-stove — and Araminta little girl I once wrote you about) brought it to us in baskets three times a day. Oh, Aunt Matilda, camping out is an ideal life. We are both, Max and I, as brown as a berry and fresh as a pippin.



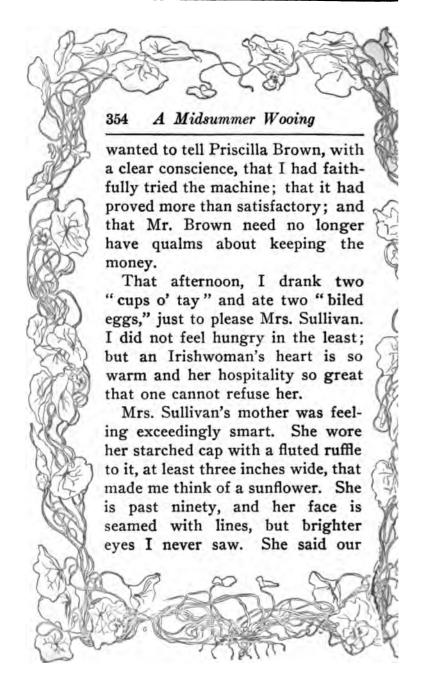
truth my health is so good that I continually thank God I am alive. Let me know at once, dear Aunt, about the check, for every day tempts me to spend it. I need so much. Your devoted niece,

" JUDITH."

After I had placed this letter in the little post-box by our gate, I walked on to Mrs. Sullivan's. She was at home, and when I asked the privilege of gathering a few of her potato bugs, the obliging woman kindly consented. Accordingly, that very afternoon, Pat carried over the machine: I went with him, and, surrounded by the whole Sullivan family, all in a gaping state of curiosity, I proceeded to pour some of the powerful chemical into the nozzle to the umbrella.

A Midsummer Wooing Then I screwed on the top and Pat began to push the machine slowly up and down the potato patch. He worked for an hour or more, but did not gather a single bug; and I was quite in despair, when - suddenly it occurred to me I had forgotten to press the little spring that Mr. Brown told me would open the valve in the machine. I pressed it, and to the great delight of Pat and myself, and the whole Sullivan family included, we began at once to gather a fine crop of bugs. I declared that I could not see why this wonderful and ingenious little machine had not already made Mr. Brown's fortune! We all know that potato bugs are plentiful.

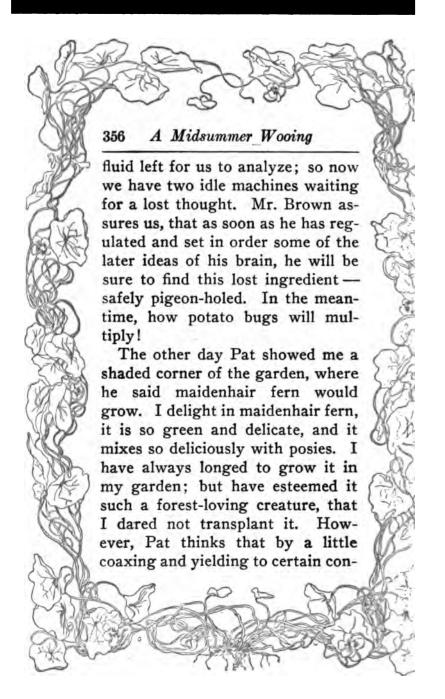
> Although the garden needed him sadly, I allowed Pat to clear the whole patch for Mrs. Sullivan. I



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machine was "a caution," and when we showed her the potato bugs it had gathered, she screamed: "Howly Mither! look at thim ugly

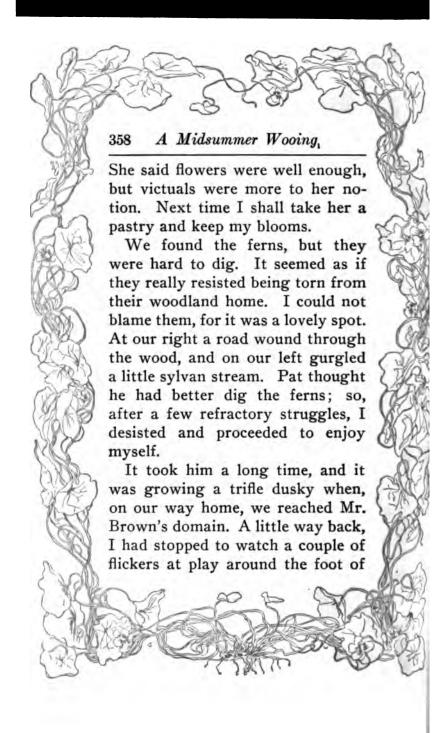
divils!" Max was quite interested in our bug-exterminator. He said "when he found time, he should like to examine it;" but in the meanwhile, I was besieged with enthusiastic neighbours, who borrowed the machine until the fluid was exhausted. When I sent to Mr. Brown's for more fluid, the most provoking thing happened. Belinda, by mistake, had burned up the formula; and Mr. Brown - though he sat for a straight hour racking his poor brain - could not recollect its one most important ingredient. Then I sent to Mr. Simmons; but unfortunately, he had not a drop of the



ditions of the soil, we may succeed. So my gardener and I, armed with baskets and two sharp trowels, set out for a wood across the lake, where maidenhair fern grows. Before leaving home we filled our baskets with flowers, as we expected to pass the poorhouse. Pat wanted to remember his old friend,

Hetty Allen, who lives there, and I desired to pay a compliment to an ancient woman, who once "mistook" me for her long-lost daughter.

We found our friends well and at home, as usual. Mrs. Allen took her flowers and kissed them lovingly, but did not remember the giver. Poor soul, her mind seems quite gone; but she still preserves a love for the blessed flowers. The other woman was not so pleased.



a tall chestnut tree. They darted here and there, showing the golden linings to their wings and that bright splash of scarlet at the back of each head. Such fun as they were having! It was so interesting to watch them; but at last I tore myself away, for I remembered that Pat wanted to water the garden. As we climbed the fence into Mr. Brown's large field, we were not

prepared for the sight that greeted

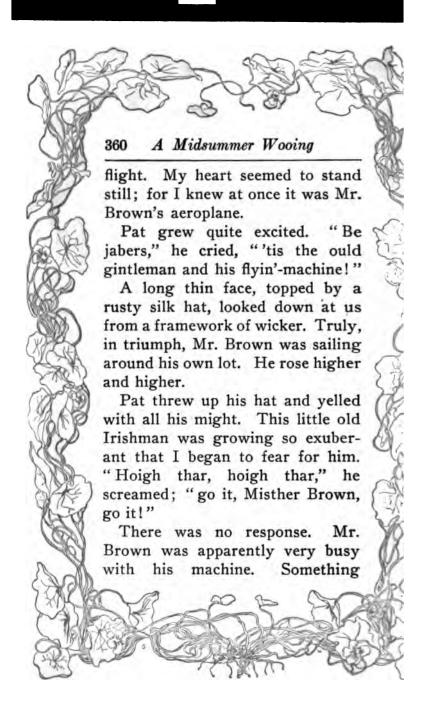
us.

Pat saw it first.

"Begorra," he cried; "look, look

o' thar, Missus!"

I gazed upward and beheld a little distance above us, slowly sailing through the air, a huge balloonlike thing with a pair of flapping black wings. It resembled a bird of ill omen taking its laborious

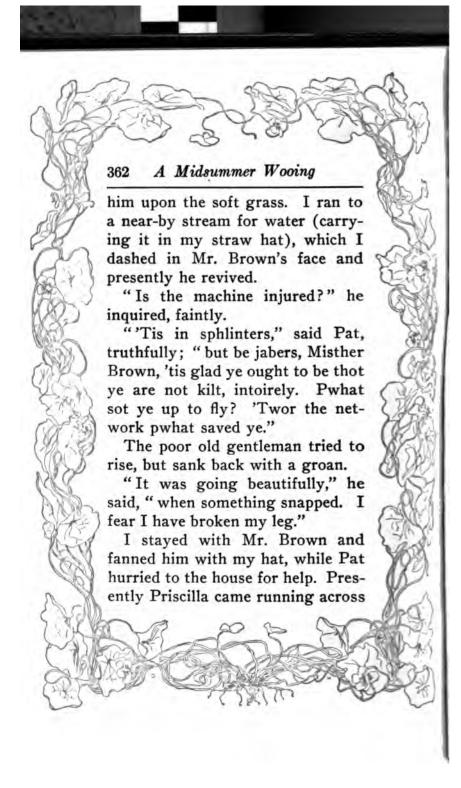


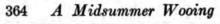
seemed to trouble him. He leaned far out and caught at a dangling rope, but missed it. I heard an ominous crack; then the airship began to fall rapidly. It was a moment of fearful suspense.

Pat and I ran toward that end of the field. Surely, Mr. Brown had lost control of it, for the huge affair wobbled fearfully, and was descending directly over a stone-pile. It came down with a thump. There was a splintering crash and then a groan. We ran the faster, only to find Mr. Brown, in a fearful tangle, lying unconscious upon the

"Be jabers, the ould gintleman has lighted!" cried Pat; but he was very tender as he extricated the unconscious man and with my help lifted him from the stones and laid

heap of stones.



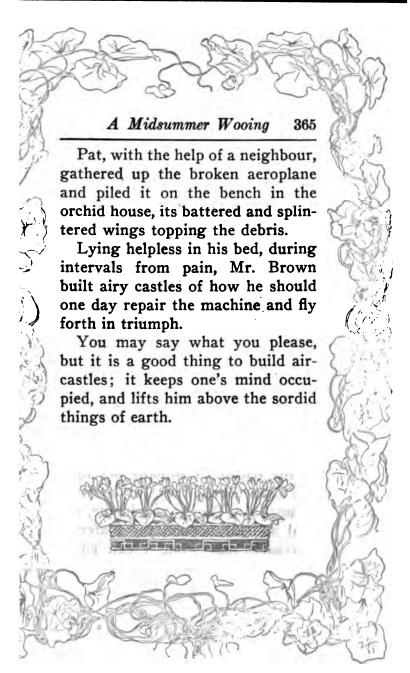


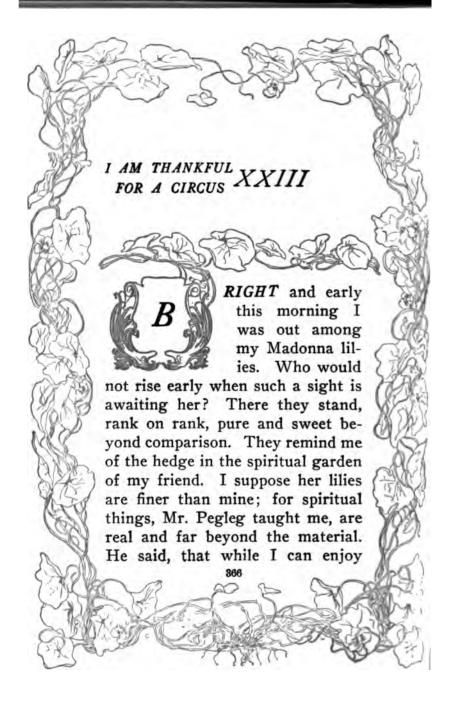
plied Mr. Brown, "I did not tell you. I did not wish you to accompany me, Priscilla."

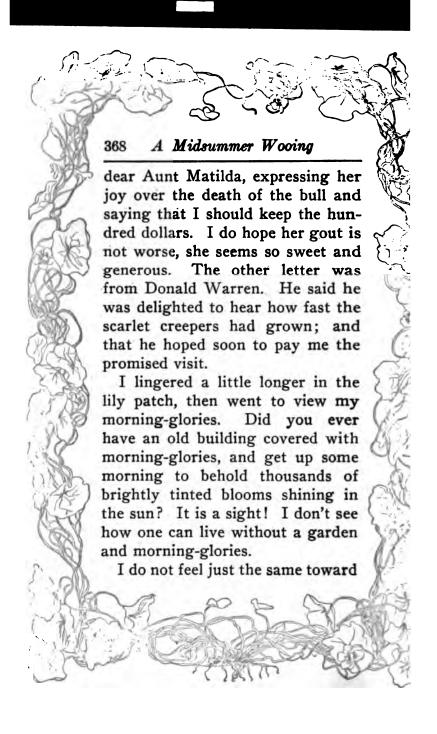
The poor child silently wrung her hands, and partly to quiet her, I bade her go for more water. I saw that Mr. Brown was growing faint again.

By the time she was back, Pat and Belinda had arrived, bearing a mattress between them. We laid Mr. Brown upon it, and by each taking hold of a corner we managed with much hard work to bear him safely to the house. He groaned all the way, and poor Priscilla's tears fell like rain.

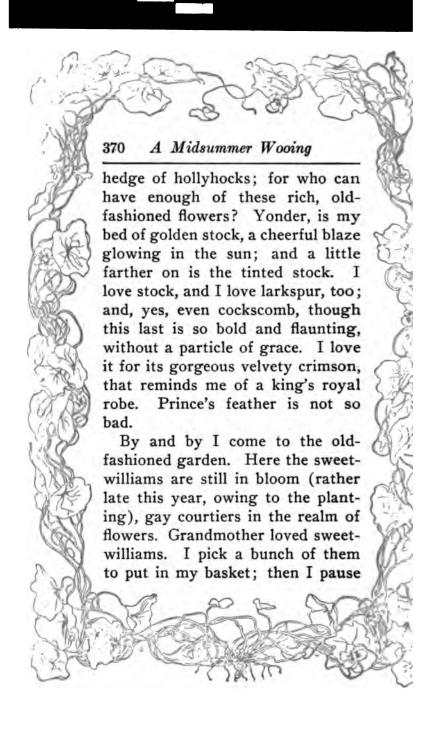
The doctor found that Mr. Brown had fractured his hip. He told me it would be many months before the unfortunate gentleman could hope to walk again; perhaps never.







A Midsummer Wooing the morning-glories as I do toward the lilies. I reverence the lilies: but I revel in the morning-glories. Their gayety excites me. I feel like a primitive Methodist: I want to shout. After I had looked my fill I went to the sweet-pease patch. Sweet pease are undoubtedly the most satisfactory flowers grown. Mine have been unusually fine this year. Every day I pick and pick them; and the next morning, lo, hundreds of little airships, anchored to green tendrils, are ready to greet me. They must come out in the night. I find the hollyhocks with bees buzzing in their silken frocks. How tall they are grown; and oh, how rich the colours, from deepest, darkest crimson to faintest pink, vivid scarlet, creamy yellow and pure white! I must extend my

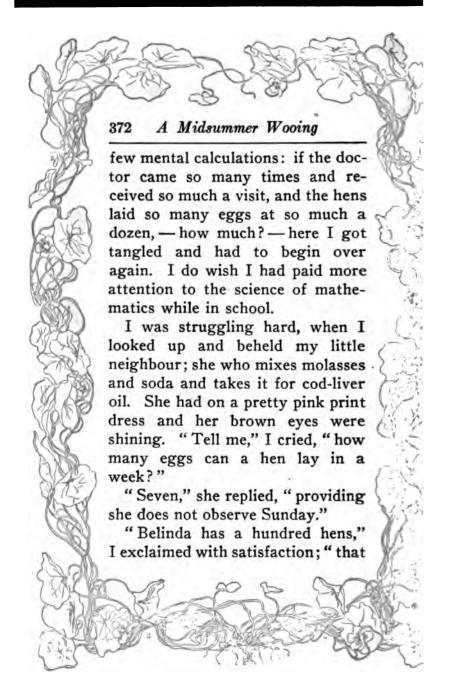


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to look down the straight borders of box. I am thinking of a sun-dial. It must be in the old-fashioned garden, to be sure, and on that stretch of open lawn where the sun can spy it all day long. I shall plant a crimson rose to twine about the grayness of its stone pedestal. How I need a sun-dial; I wonder that I have lived so long without one! But how much will a sun-dial

I remember the hundred dollars that my blessed Aunt Matilda has forced me to accept. Why not gratify this heart's desire? Still, there are reasons: the Browns will have a frightful doctor's bill to pay. The hens must do their best; and even then, I doubt their ability to lay eggs enough to liquidate it. I sat down on the grass to make a

cost?



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makes seven hundred eggs a week. It should do it."

"But hens don't lay an egg every day," she remarked.

"They ought to," I said reproachfully. "It's their business;" then I realized that I had not greeted her. The problem could wait.

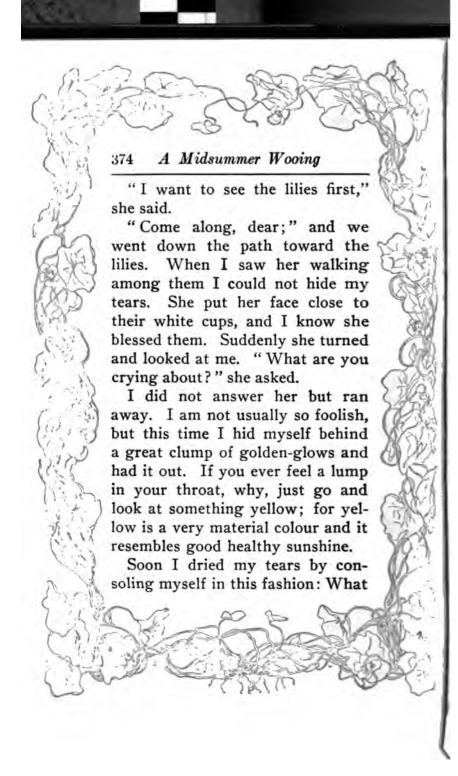
"Oh," I said joyfully, "I am so glad to see you. How pretty your frock is! Why, you are as gay as my posies."

"Am I?" she said smiling.
"Well, I feel gay. For one day a

great load is off my mind. I shall not have to cook. There is a circus at Zanesville; my husband has gone and taken all the children."

"The Lord is merciful," I cried.

"You shall stay with me. We will put in such a day!"



Set the table under the honeysuckle on the porch and fix it up

fine. You know how, Rhoda." My cook smiled, displaying her white, white teeth, and behind her

stood Araminta showing an equally immaculate set of ivories.

"I'll jes' do my best, Missus," said Rhoda, and I knew what that

meant. "Do you believe in good angels?" I asked my neighbour a little later.

"I am afraid not," she said sadly. "Oh, but you ought to," I con-

tinued. "Why not believe in good? I know you believe in evil."

"Who can help but believe in evil?" she sighed.

"You can," I remarked, stoutly.

"There is just as much good in the world as there is evil:



think. Now, if you believed in the good as steadfastly as you do in the evil, why things would get better. I truly trust in good angels. I can feel them all around me, helping me out of every difficulty. They would

go away if I did not trust them. I wish you wouldn't look so sad when you see my flowers. They do not bloom to make one weep; but to make one glad—from the very crown of his head to the soles of

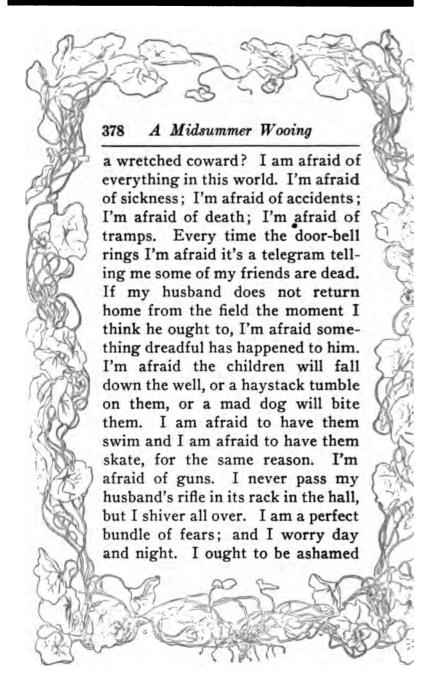
his feet."

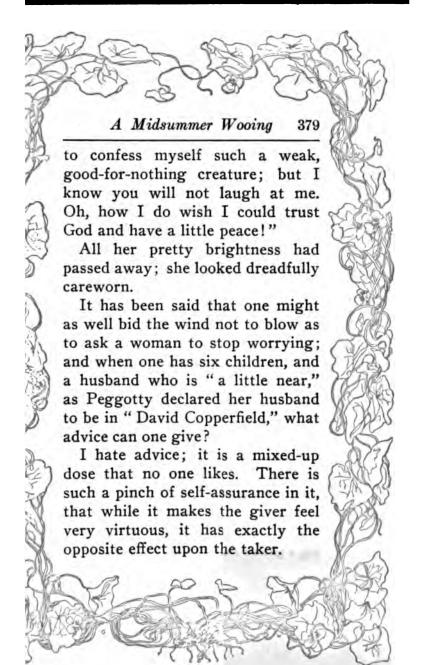
She sighed. "They do make me glad, and yet —"

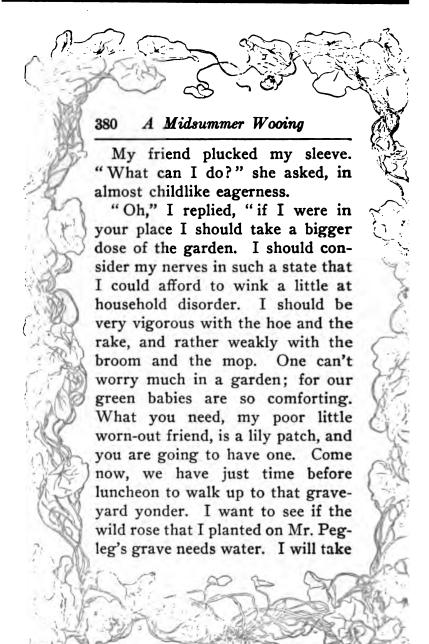
"I know," I said, "you have had a hard life."

My little neighbour looked away for a moment, then she turned her eyes toward me.

"I am going to confess to you," she said. "Do you know that I am







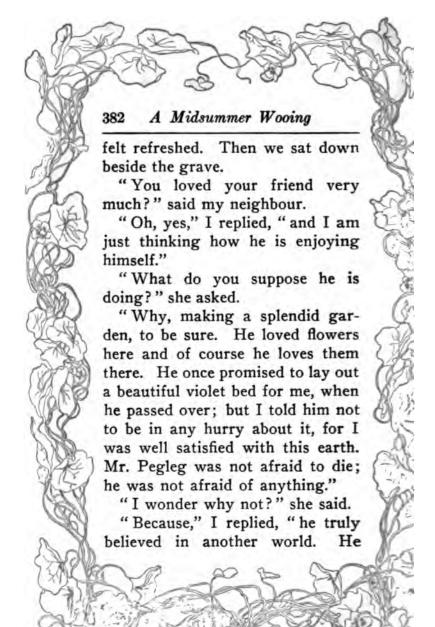
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a pail along, as there is a spring in the lane."

It was one of those glorious, breezy days, when the wind whips your hair and tingles on your cheeks. We climbed the fence into my field, and of course I had to explain to my little neighbour just how I intended to glorify this spot of earth. She seemed very much interested, which was truly pleasing to a garden woman.

I love the peace of a little country graveyard. "Lonely," did you say? Why, who can be lonely where there are trees and grass and birds and sunshine?

The wild rose needed water, as it had not rained for several days. I fetched two pailfuls from the spring and emptied them gently about the roots. I know the rose



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didn't just think there might be one, he knew it. Too many of us think there may be a God and there may be another world — we are not at all sure; but Mr. Pegleg was settled in his faith, and he declared there was a law by which one might prove this blessedness of a life beyond.

"He thought we have a right to happiness and joy, even on this earth. Oh, how he glorified life — my dear old friend! I wish he could have told you about the borderland, where our friends (that have passed over) wait to welcome us. He said it is not so far away.

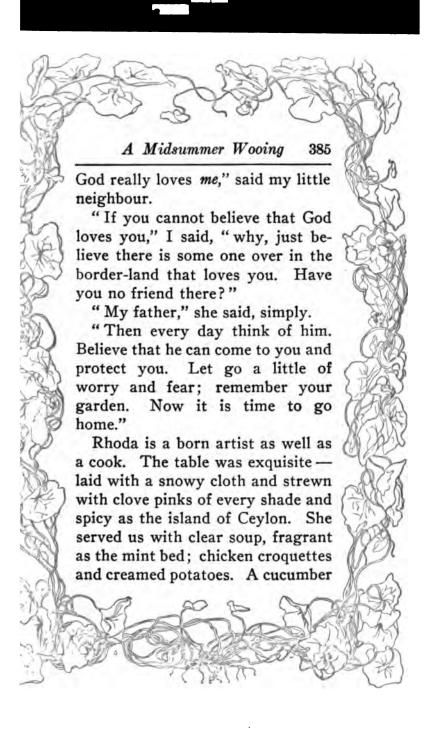
"He never spoke of death as going down to the grave, but rather as going up to the grave; and listen, dear, Mr. Pegleg had a little sweetheart who died years and years ago.

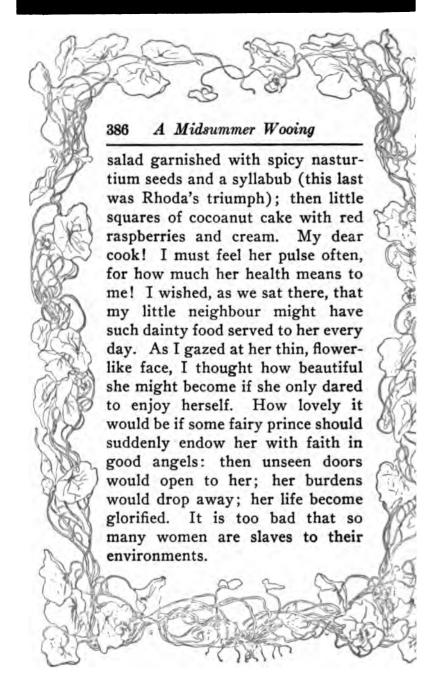
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Do you know," I bent close to her and spoke low, "he saw her wandering among my roses a week before he died. I feel that she came with the angel of death and led him away. Now, little neighbour, if there is another world not so far off, blessed and sweet, awaiting us, why so afraid of transition? If good spirits return to earth, why cannot they guard and keep us? Only, we must learn to trust them a little.

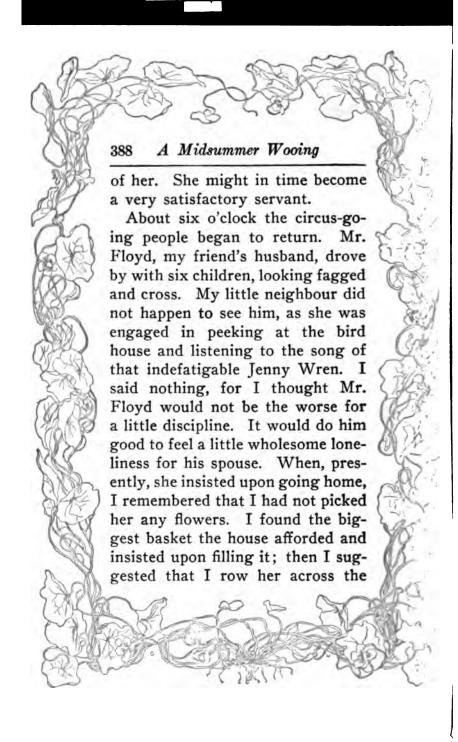
"So many people scoff at Mr. Pegleg's belief; but I—I have found it very sweet and more comforting than all the unbeliefs in the world. I am going to try to live up to it. It does not fret me to look at this long, narrow grave, for I know my friend is not there."

"How I wish I could believe that





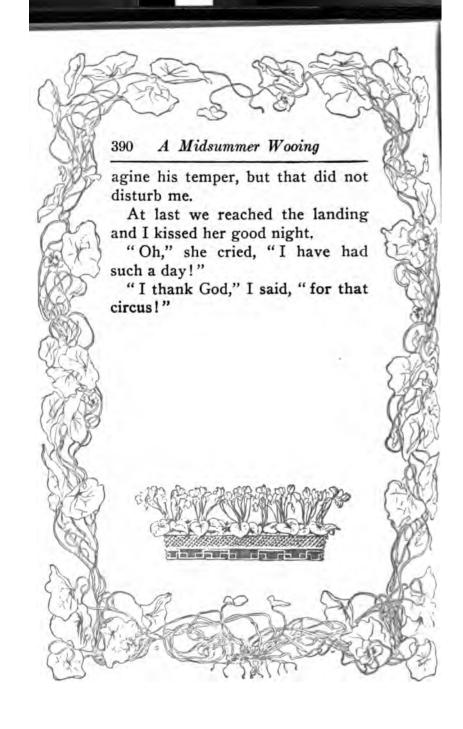
I whispered to Araminta Sprangleberry to fetch my friend's dish that I might heap it again with red raspberries. These red raspberries picked at dawn, how fresh and plump they are! Every berry seems to stand by itself, helping to form a little crimson pyramid over which I dust snowy sugar and pour good, rich Jersey cream. It is a pity everybody cannot live in the country at least once in his life, if only to taste red raspberries, picked at dawn. Araminta is very nimble in waiting at table; so much her aunt has taught her. Now, if that aunt could only teach her not to stand on her head; not to pull up the radishes and the little onions; not to make up sly faces at Pat; not to torment my poor rooster and his hen; why then, I should have hopes

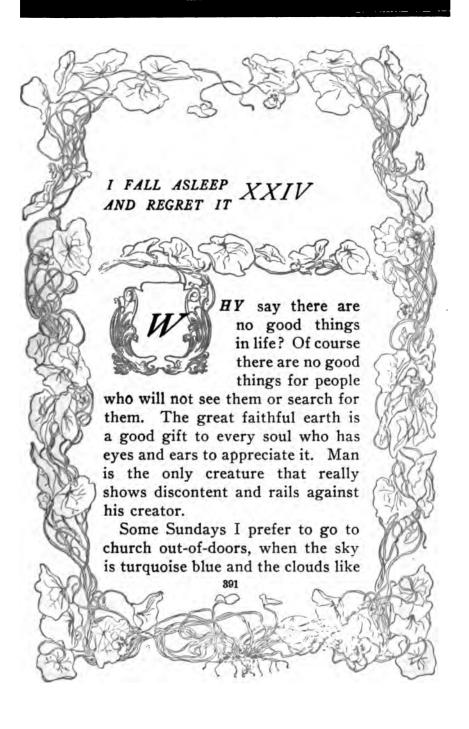


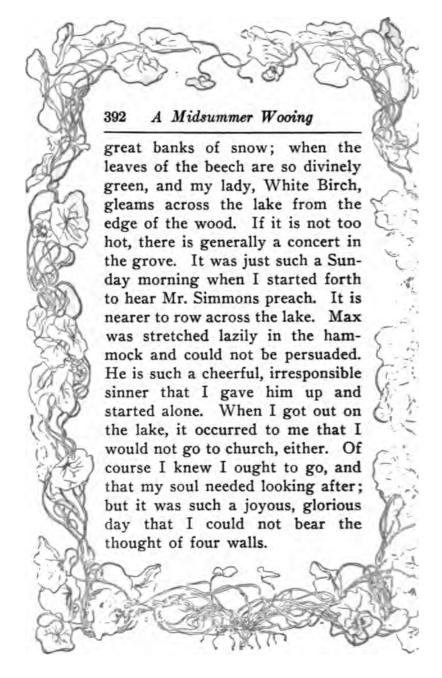
A Midsummer Wooing

lake. "It is easier than walking home by the road," I said.

She demurred, but her eyes were shining when I half pushed her into the boat. It was a still evening on the lake. We rowed across a perfect mirror whose surface had become invisible; our light bark seemed poised between two worlds. A wood-thrush was chanting his angelic song in the edge of the grove. As he suddenly flew away I caught his moving shadow in the water. It was as if I beheld his spirit. It took me a long time to cross the lake. I was in no hurry and I knew it would do my friend good to sit still and drink in the glory of God. I hoped by the time she reached home, Mr. Floyd would have the supper over and the six children put to bed. I could im-



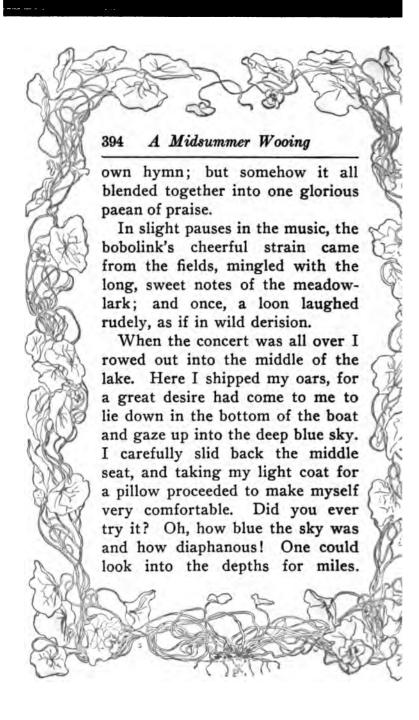




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So I stayed out and did a very wrong thing. I rowed about the lake for a long time, peeping into every little cove. Once, I started up a company of tip-ups; and again I disturbed the pious meditations of a crane. He dropped his other leg and quickly vanished in the reeds. I watched some water-skaters that had no respect for the Sabbath; and some beetles that appeared to be dancing the lancers. I rowed to the cranberry bay and picked a few late blossoms. When the concert in the grove began I slipped into the warm brown shadow - cast by a tall buttonwood - and listened. It was a fine concert. Brown

thrashers and wood-thrushes, catbirds and robins, orioles and warblers, all seemed to take part. I suppose each one was singing his



A Midsummer Wooing

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There was a great bank of idle clouds that floated so lazily across the zenith. Would it ever get anywhere, I wondered. I watched and watched it, until my eyelids

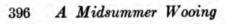
quivered and finally closed, — I slept.

I dare not say how long I slept, for I have a good conscience and am not easily awakened. I was just indulging in a beautiful dream, when I felt a hand on my boat and heard a voice crying, "Thank God she's here!"

I opened my eyes and saw Max. His face was white from fear; then I raised up and discovered that he was seated in Mr. Spear's boat.

Mr. Spear was rowing.

"Judith Elliot!" exclaimed my husband; then he remembered our neighbour. "If you will row up



a trifle closer, Mr. Spear, I will step into my wife's boat. Now that she is safe I need not trouble you any longer. I feel greatly obliged to you."

"Ye're welcome," said Mr. Spear, "an' I'm mighty glad Mrs. Elliot ain't drownded arter all."

"Who thought I was drowned?"
I asked.

"I," replied Max sternly. "It was long past church time and you did not come home; then I discovered the boat, apparently empty, in the middle of the lake. What else was I to think?"

I made no reply. It was one of those times when silence is golden. Mr. Spear rowed away and then the storm broke.

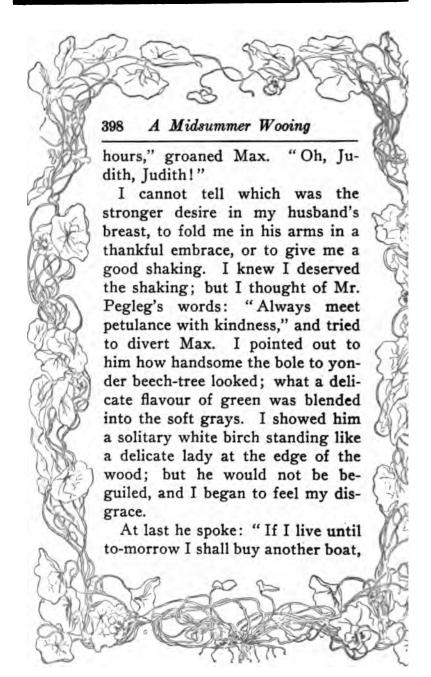
"I say, Judith Elliot," cried my husband, "you are the most exasperating creature alive! Oh, if you had been drowned! I shudder to think of it. You appear to be wholly irresponsible. The fear you have caused me! Have you no heart—no thought for others? What if I had lost you!"

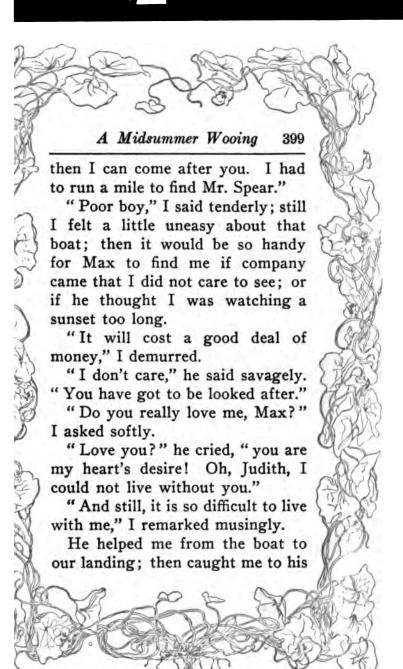
"But you have not lost me," I said, cheerfully. "I know it was a shame, and I am so sorry that I fell asleep; but you see, well, it just happened so."

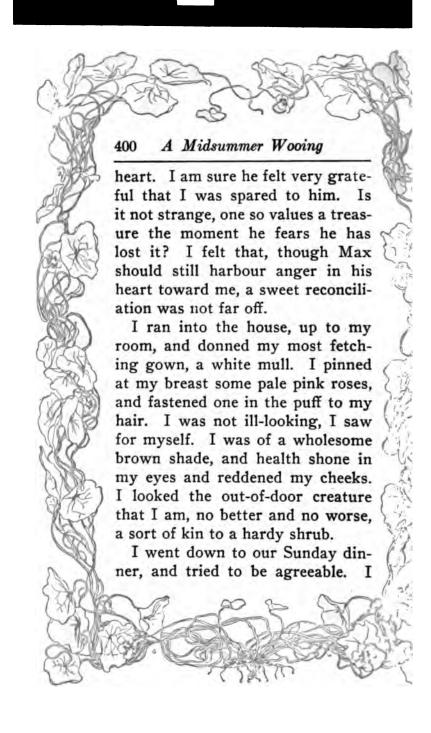
"Happened so," sneered my husband. "You never thought of me."

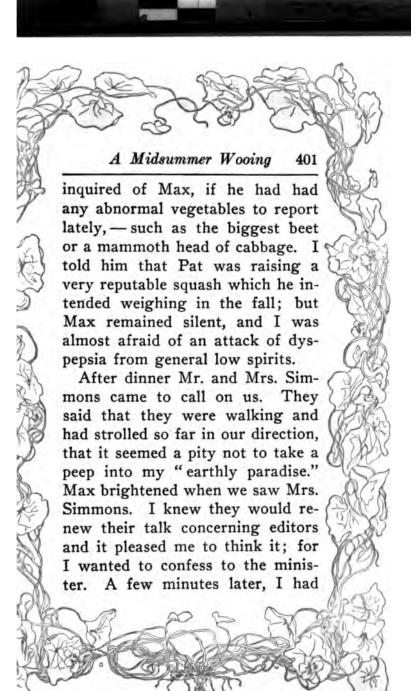
"No, dear," I said truthfully, "I was thinking of the sky and how beautiful the world is; how gently my boat rocked; and then, — but why say more? I really didn't intend to sleep more than a couple of minutes."

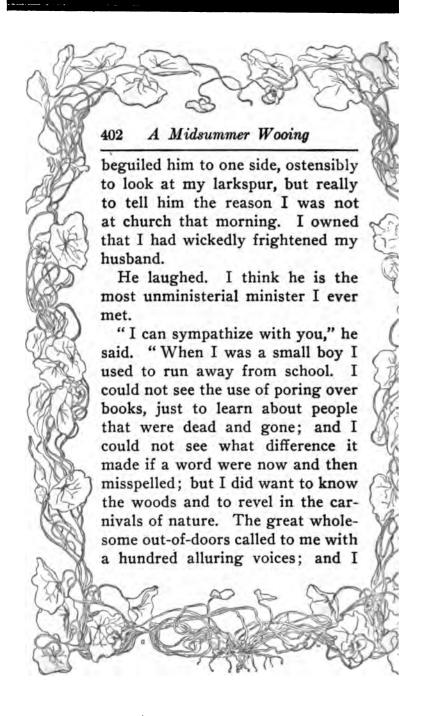
"And extended the time to two

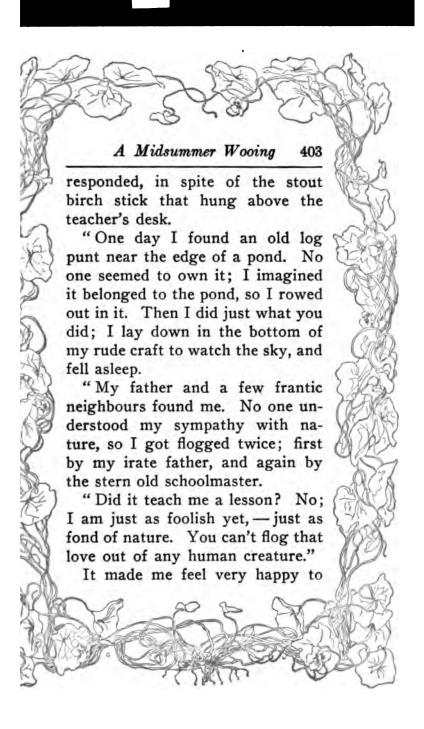




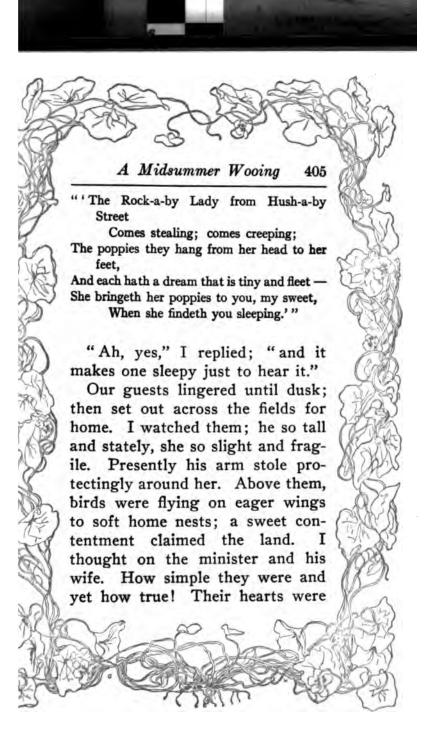


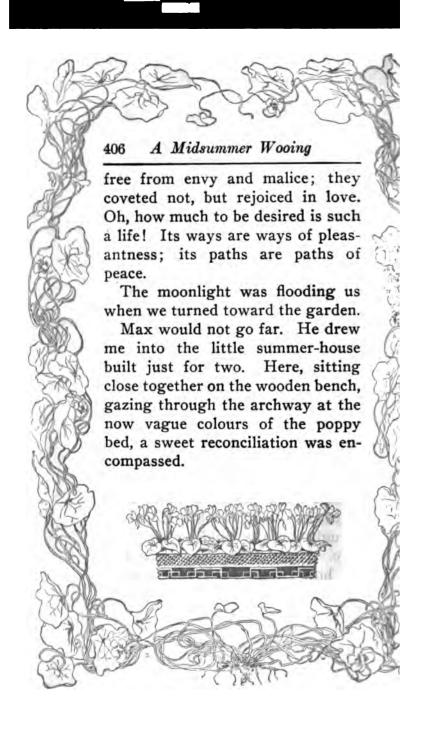


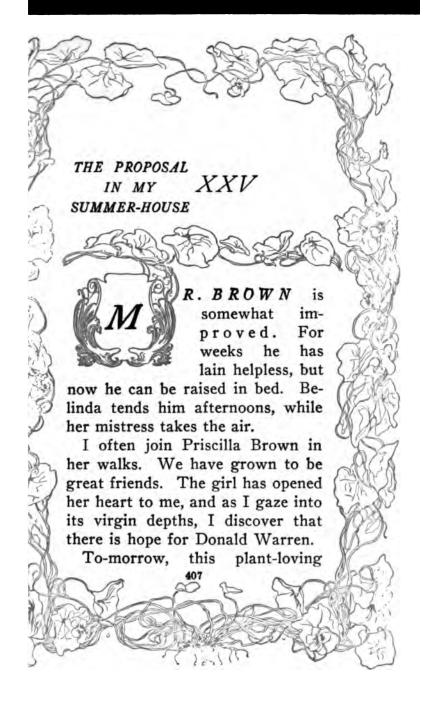


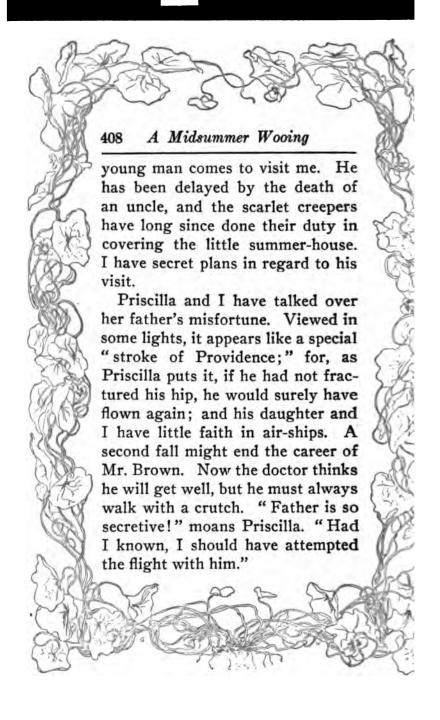


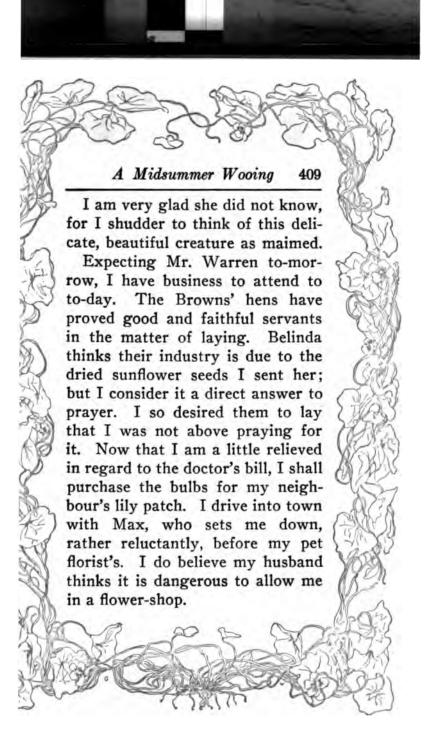


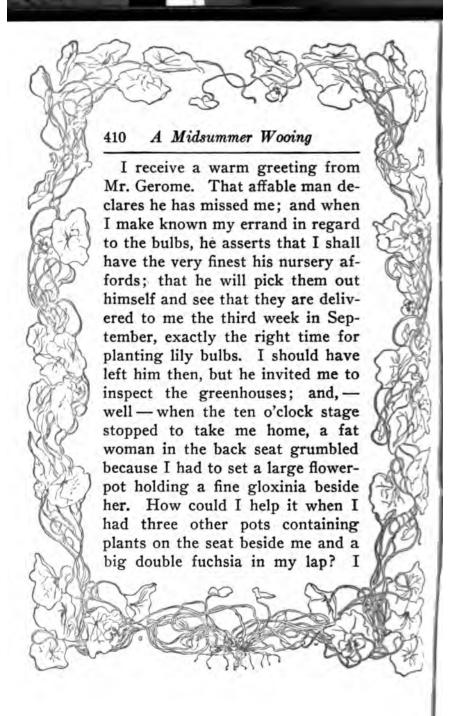


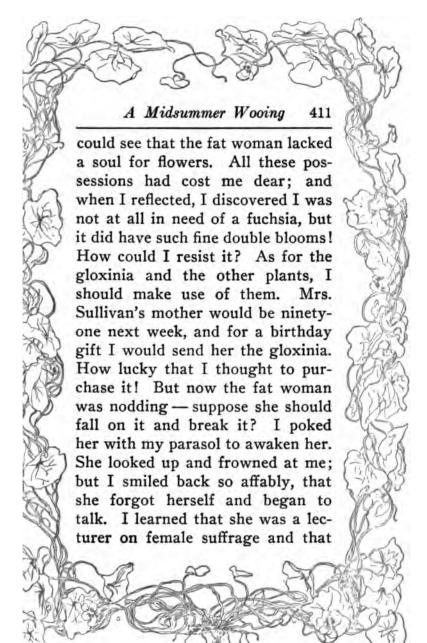


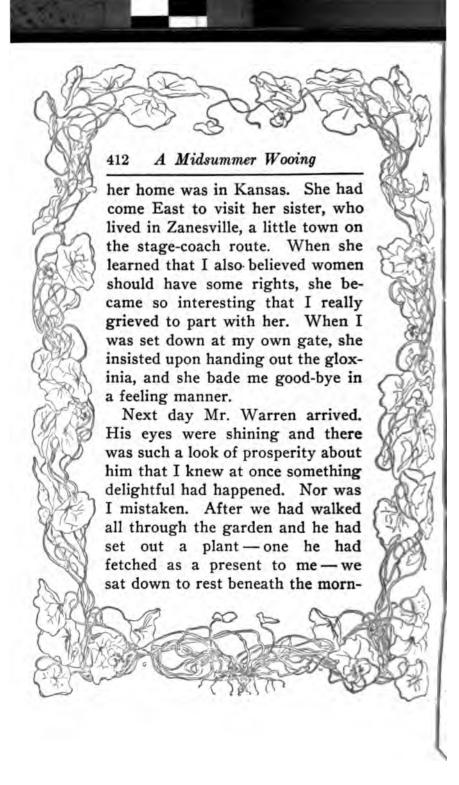


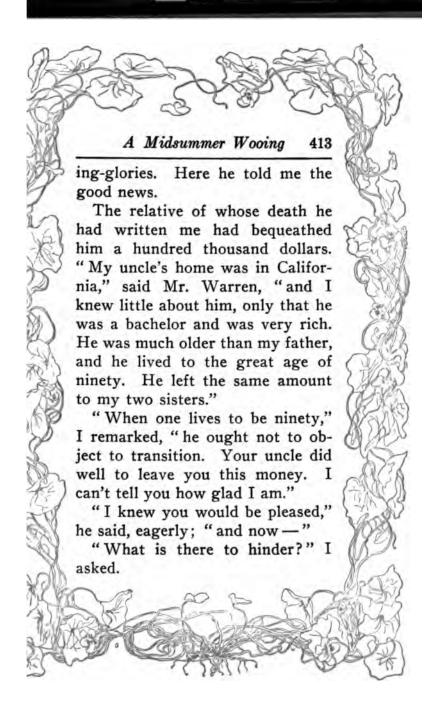


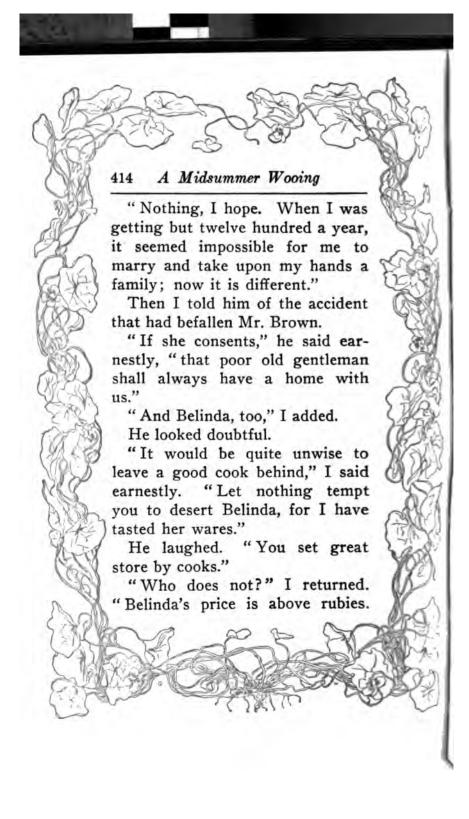


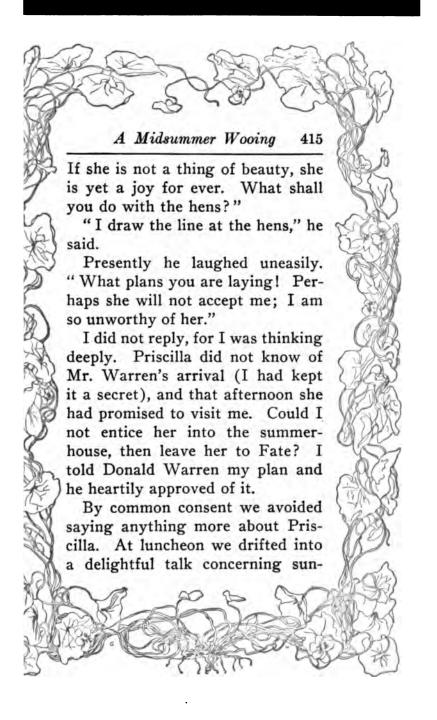


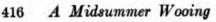




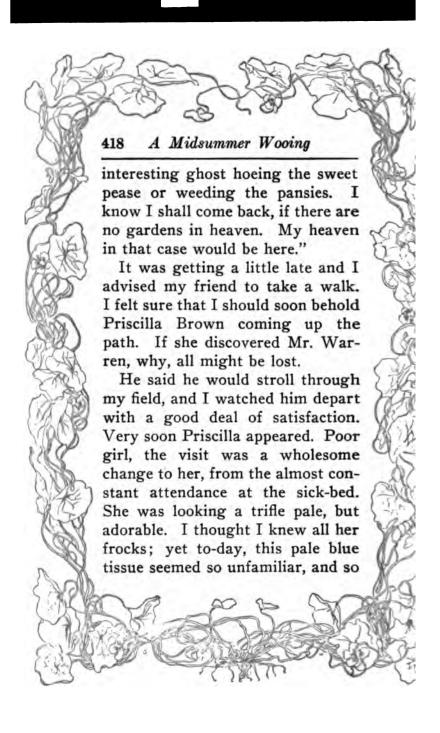


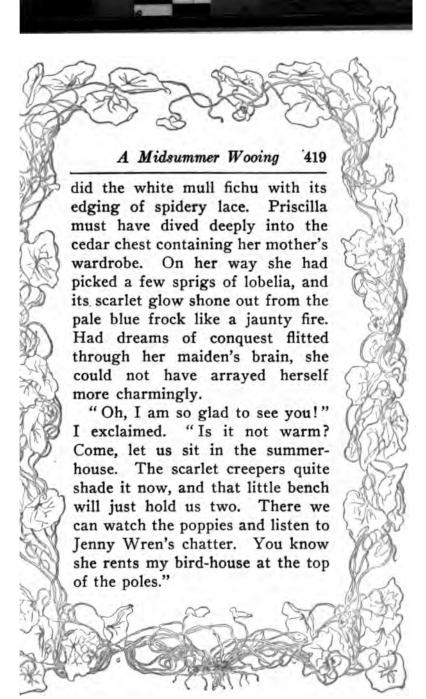


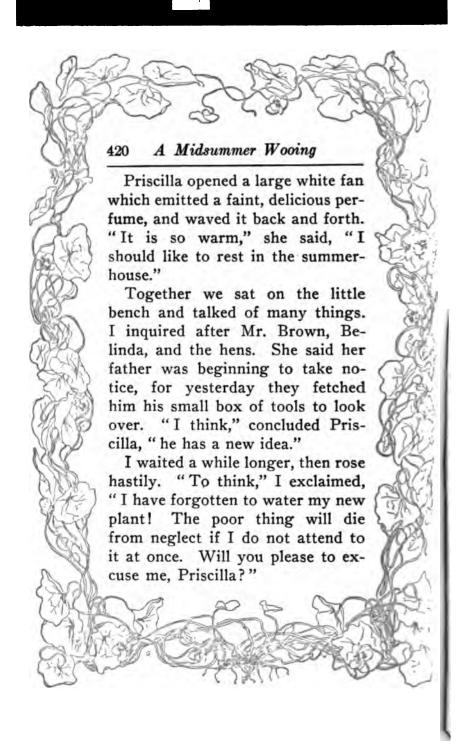


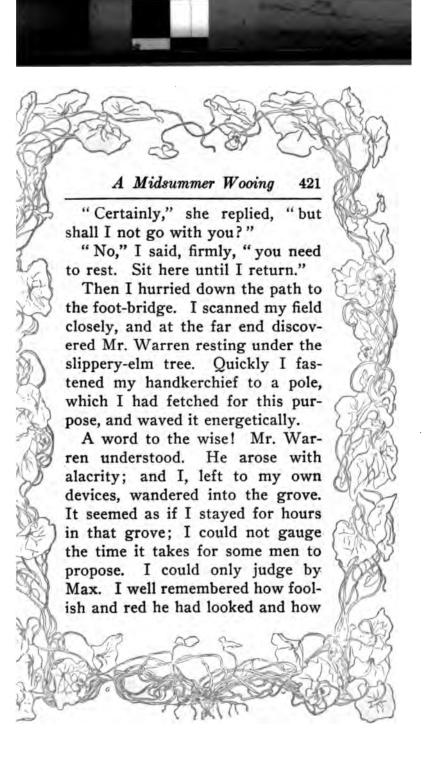


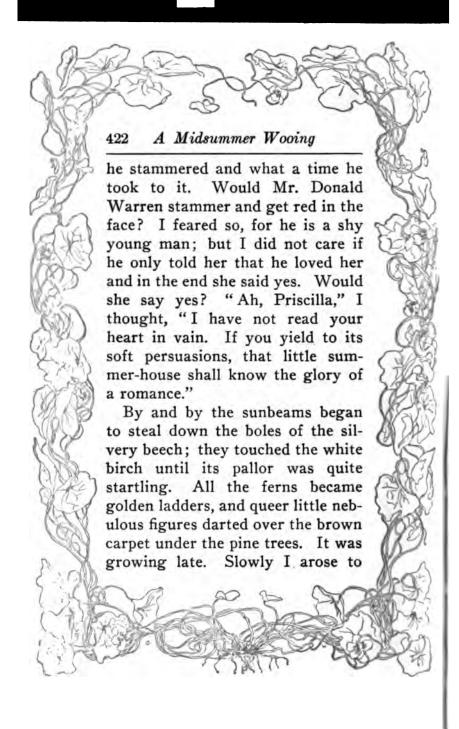
dials. Mr. Warren had seen, in an old garden at Cambridge, just such a sun-dial as I needed. He said it was the dearest old garden! High brick walls enclosed three sides of it, and here the flowers came so early in spring, dainty crocuses, hyacinths and jonquils those sweet-smelling white ones with little orange eyes - and daffodils and violets. It was a friendly old garden and clung to its favourites year after year. In a wide grassy space stood the sun-dial of gray stone with red roses clambering around it. It was quite ancient; it had marked the hours of many a life from toddling infancy to old age. Now, it was crumbling a little under the touch of time, and there was a romantic legend concerning it:

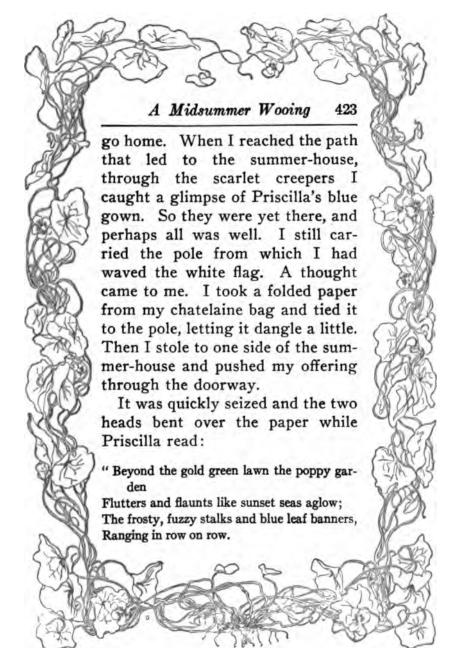












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"Oh, happy dreamers in a poppy garden, Under the soft sweet sky of summer blue, Oh, happy dreamers in a poppy garden, Say, have your dreams come true?"

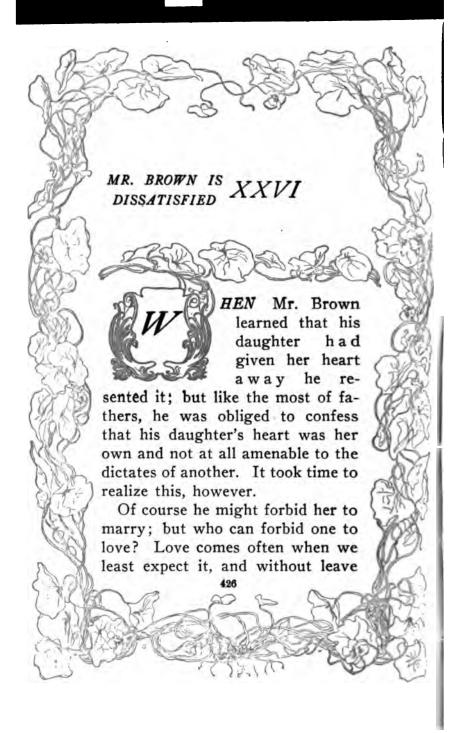
There was a shout of laughter, then Donald Warren rushed out to grasp my hands; and behind him came Priscilla, her great white fan swaying furiously and her sweet cheeks glowing like the pink of shells. I believe I shook hands with Mr. Warren at least six times, and I kissed Priscilla over and over again. We were all foolishly happy, with the happiness that ever and anon makes a paradise of this old world.

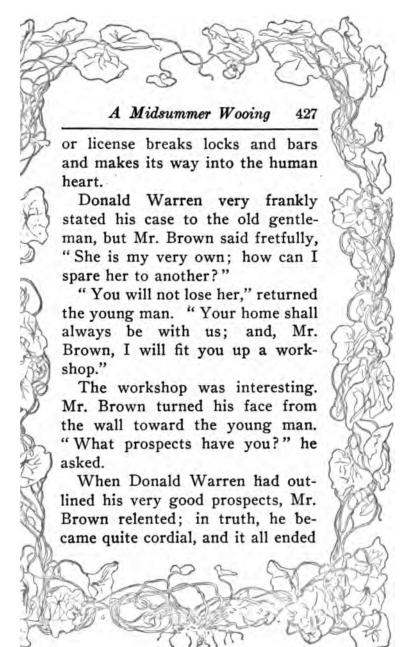
So Max found us and added his congratulations; and by and by Donald Warren rowed Priscilla across the lake. A daffodil sky flaunted in the west and the early



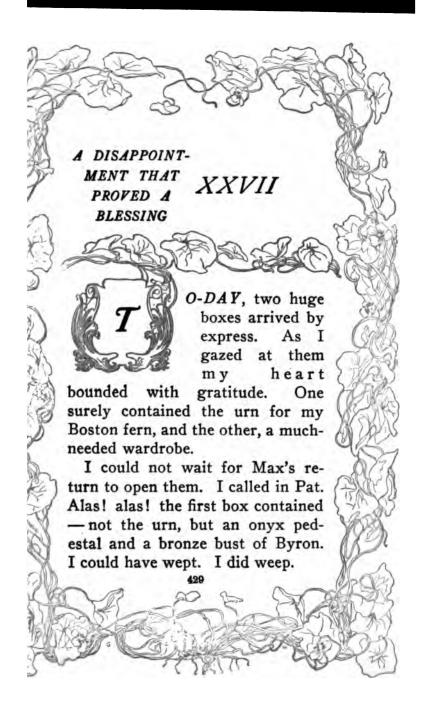
The early-rising moon made a path of glory for them



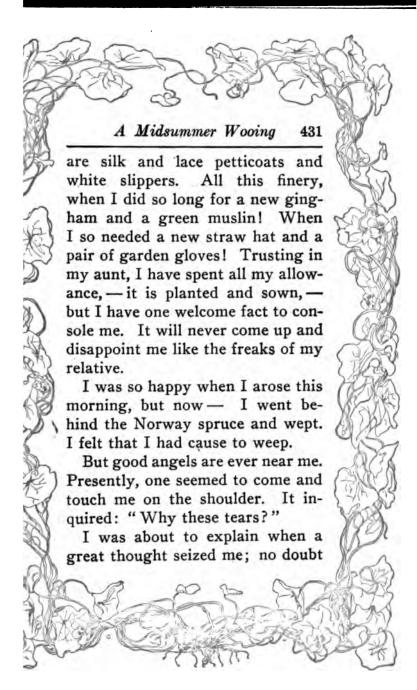


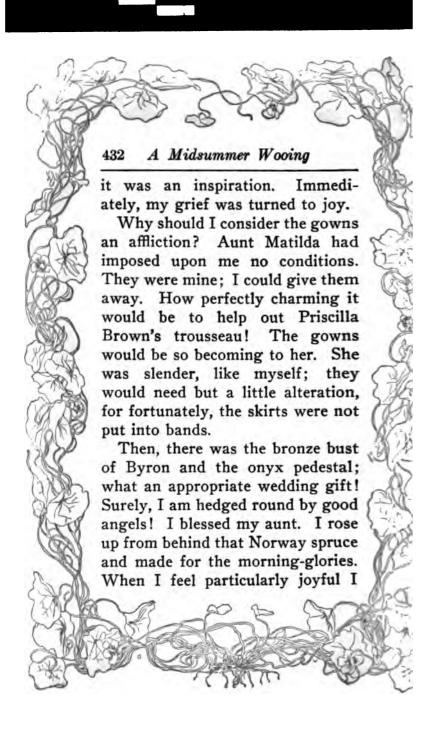


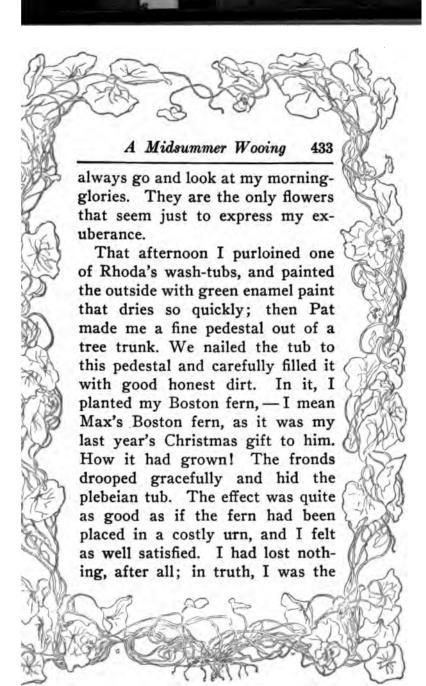


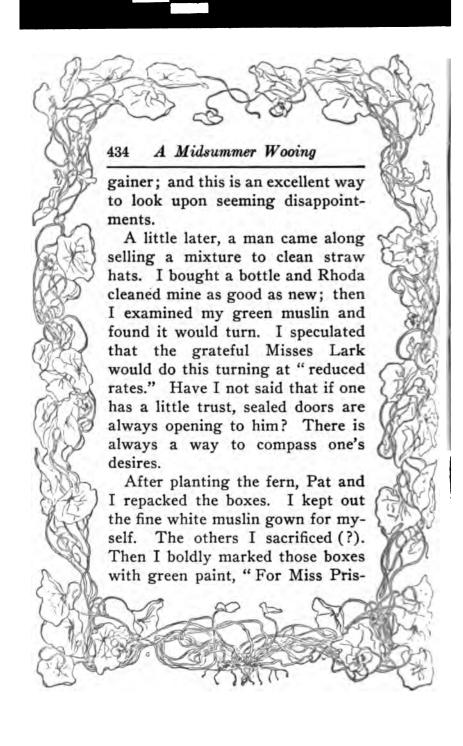


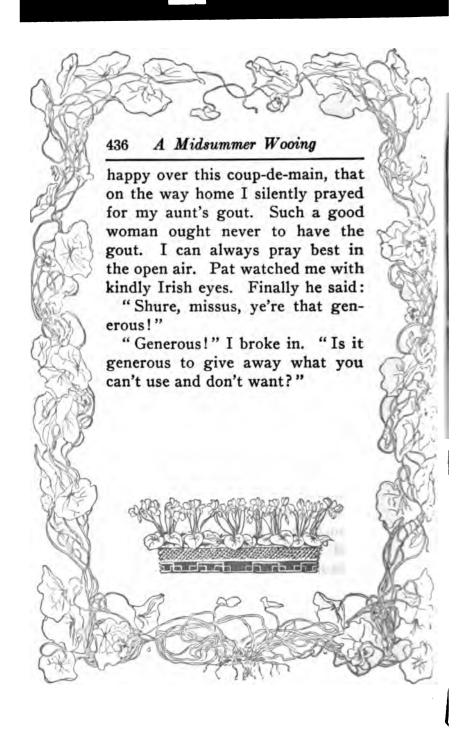
The second box; well, when my wardrobe was spread out, I really questioned my aunt's sanity. What frocks for a gardener! One is a pale blue gauze with a train at least a yard long, and all trimmed with lace and ribbon. When shall I wear it? One turn in the garden and it will be gone. Another is of pink mousseline de soie, accordionpleated. Does my aunt think me a skirt-dancer? Another, of white Liberty silk, trimmed with rows and rows of pink rosebuds. It has low neck and short sleeves. I certainly can never hoe in this gown! The last one, a little plainer, thank Heaven! - a Paris muslin with a yoke and sleeves of finest lace. can wear this upon great occasions; say, such as a wedding to come. At the bottom of the box

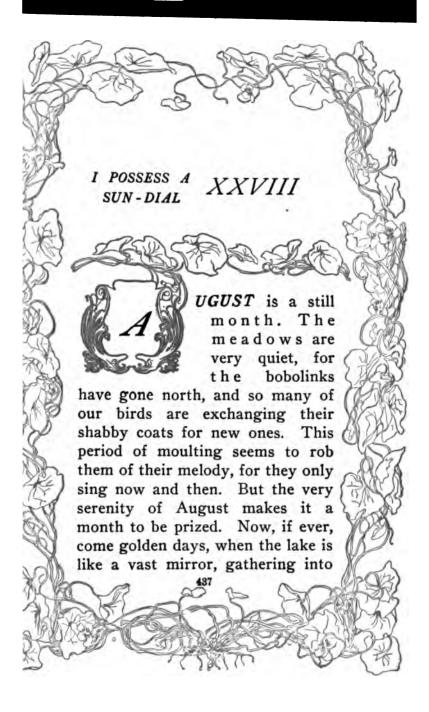


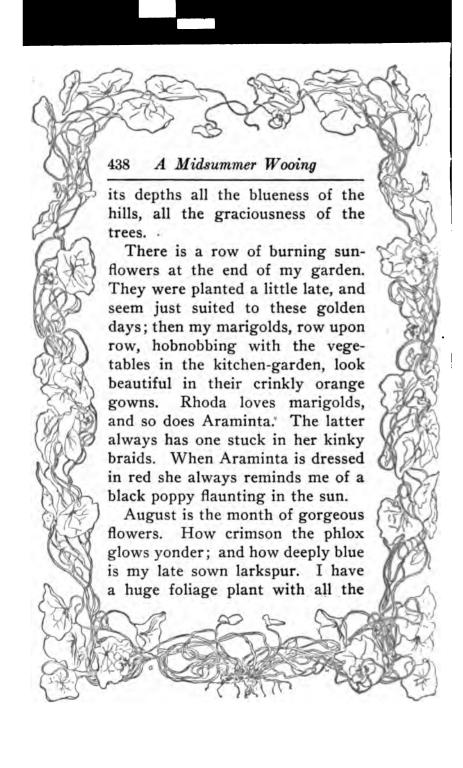




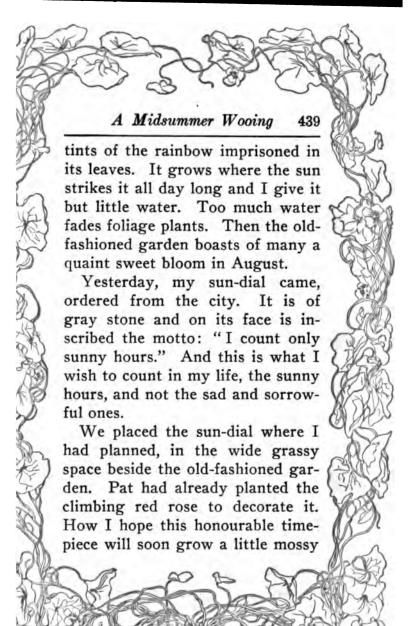


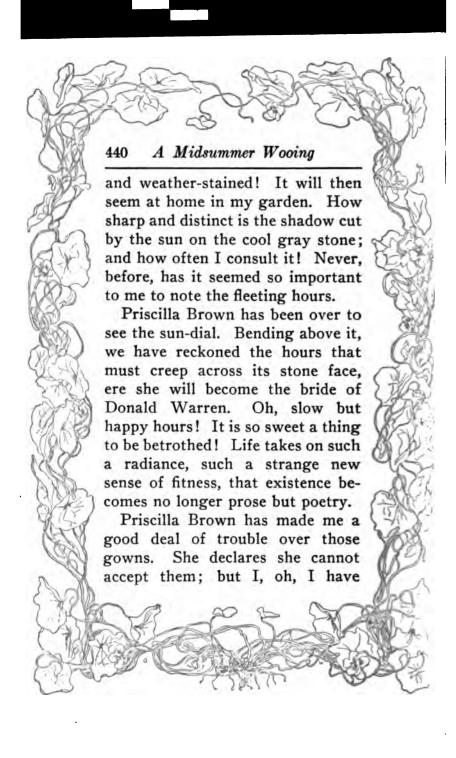


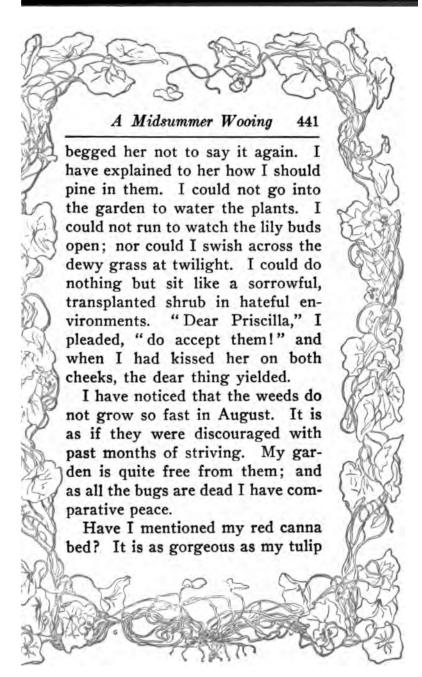


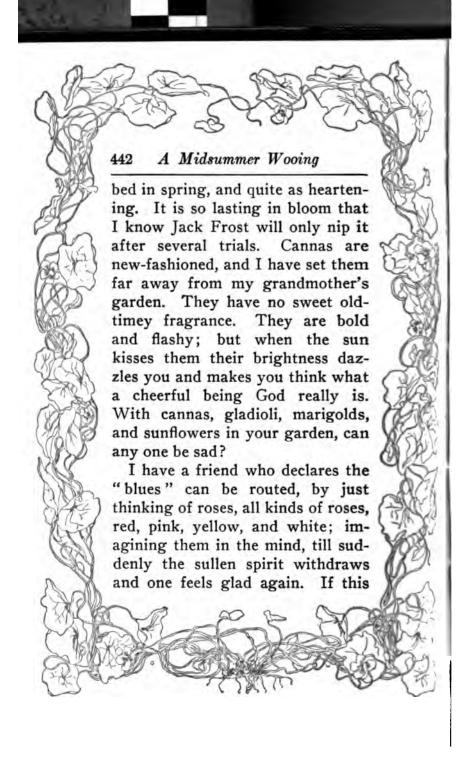


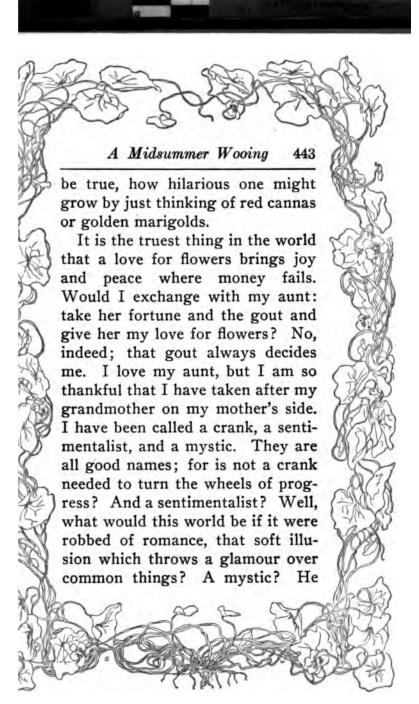








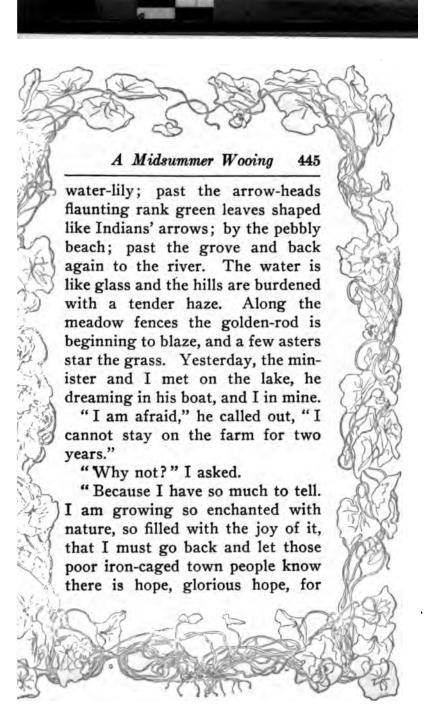


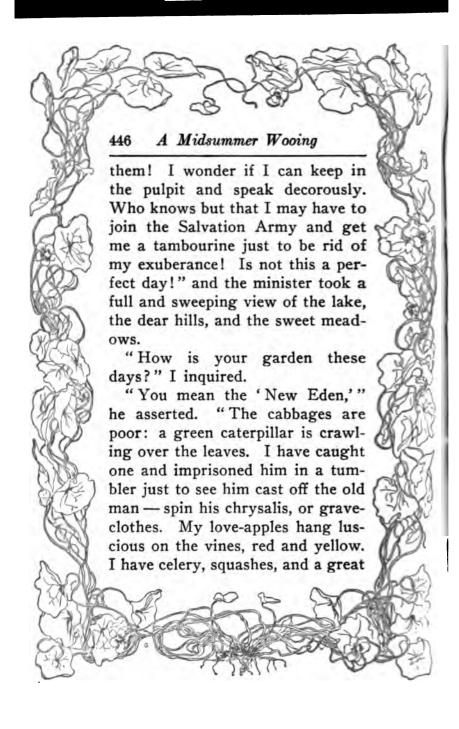


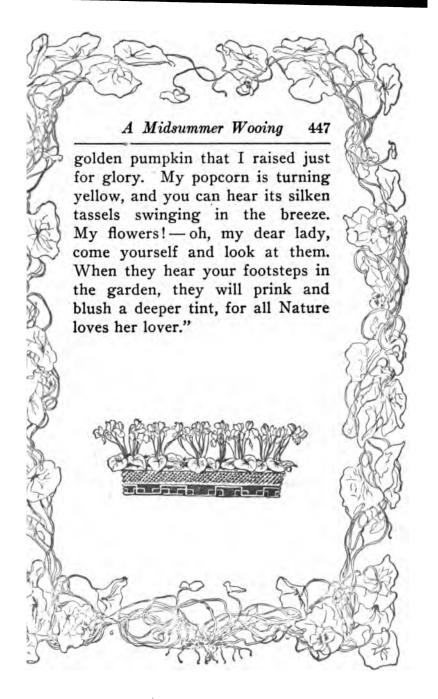


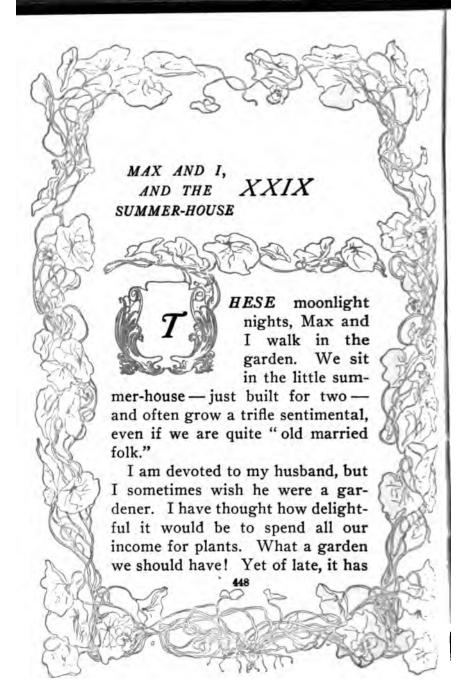
sees more than other people; peers through the material into the spiritual and beholds sights that convince him of the goodness of God for all time. The people who called me these names meant to malign me. It made me feel a little sorry, for I wondered what they had against me. I had never called them names. I am so glad that flowers are such mute comforters. I feel they love me and so do the trees, from the dainty white birch to her ragged sister that leans across the whimpering stream, all love me, because I first loved them.

If I could take you in my boat one of these still August days, I would row you past the reeds, turning a little golden, but still softly green; through the beds of yellow nuphar, those poor relations of the







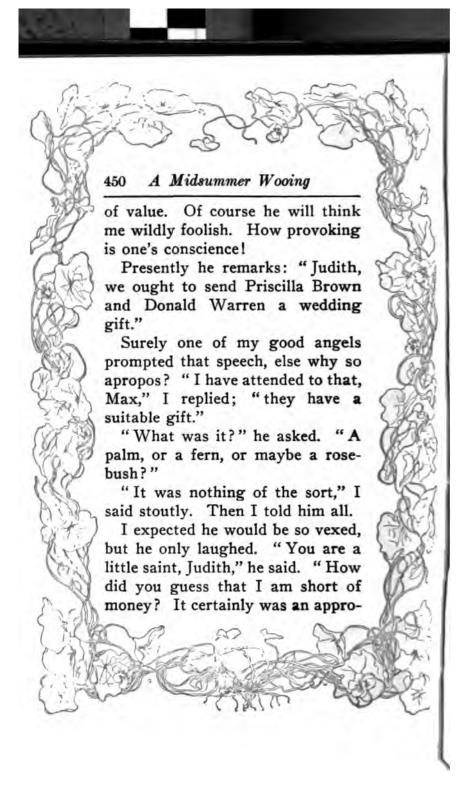


A Midsummer Wooing

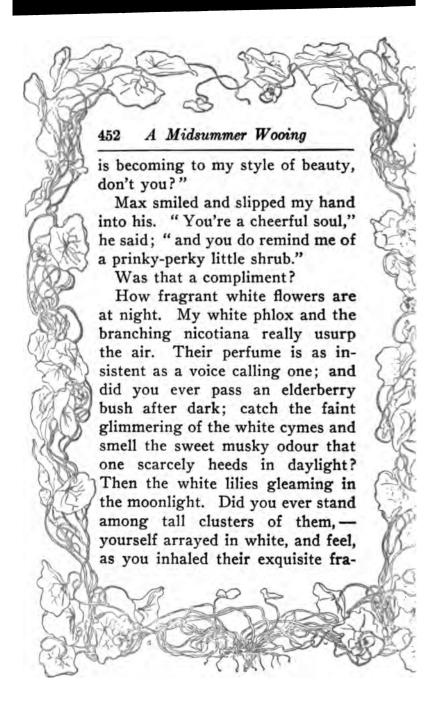
been borne in upon me that perhaps it is just as well Max is an editor. Two of a trade never agree. He might wish a plant set in one spot and I wish it set in another. What would happen then? I cannot tell; and I dare not speculate. Now everything is pleasant between us.

I never dispute where he shall place his paragraphs, or he where I shall set my sunflowers. Our tastes are totally different, but our hearts are united.

I think I should live longer if my conscience were not so trouble-some. It has been vexing me for the past week, and all because I have not told Max about Aunt Matilda's latest gifts. Here sits the poor man, serene and comfortable. I hate to disturb him by letting him know that he has lost something







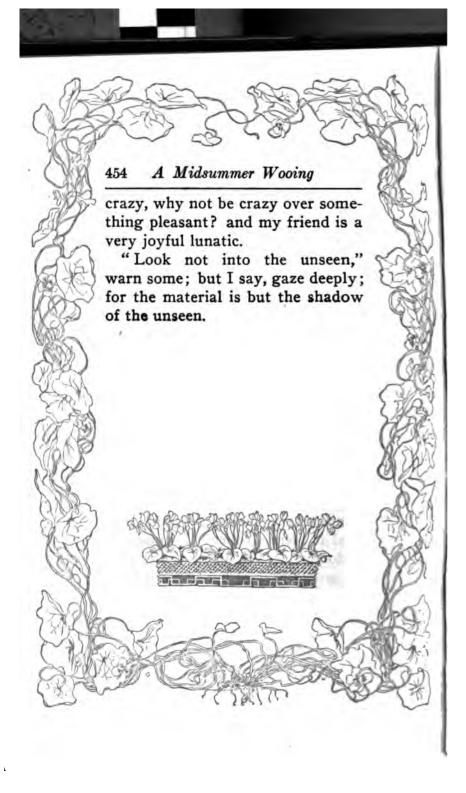
A Midsummer Wooing

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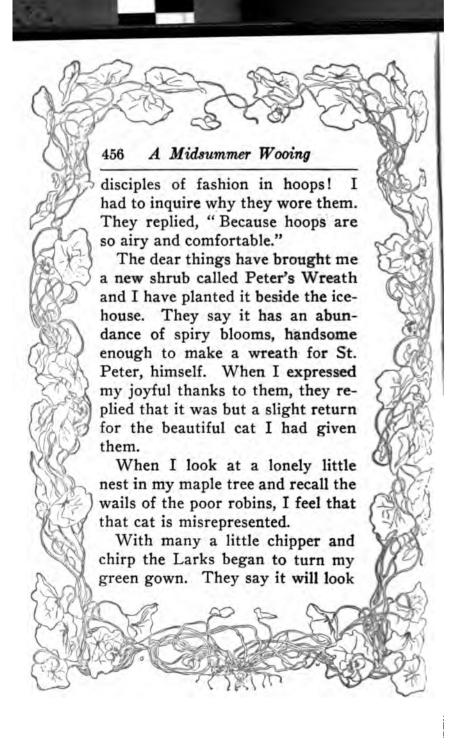
grance, your soul grow? White lilies are of the spirit, and when the moonlight shines upon them, they

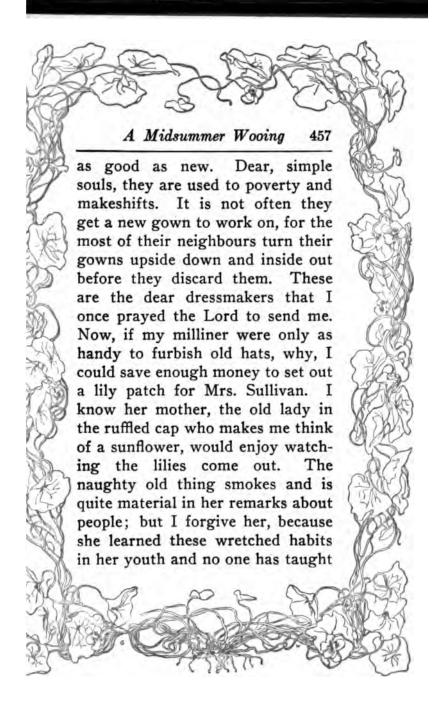
moonlight shines upon them, they touch the great invisible rim of the occult. I like to pray among the lilies. I like to ask God for a full measure of happiness, well pressed down. I don't know why I should think God was more in the lily patch than anywhere else, but I do feel His wonderful presence there; and when I smell the lilies, — why, I hear the rustling of wings.

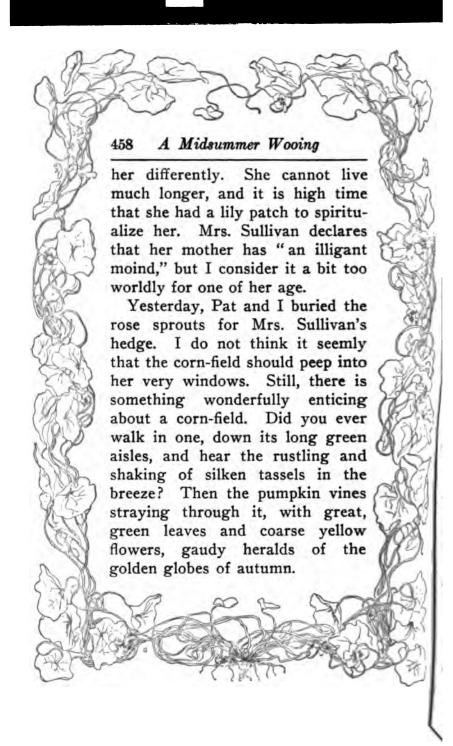
My friend, who declares she has a home in a spiritual sphere, enters her domain between tall hedges of wonderful lilies. I often think of that home as she described it. How real it seems to her! I suppose if a doctor were to diagnose her case, he would declare her fit for a lunatic asylum; but, if one must be

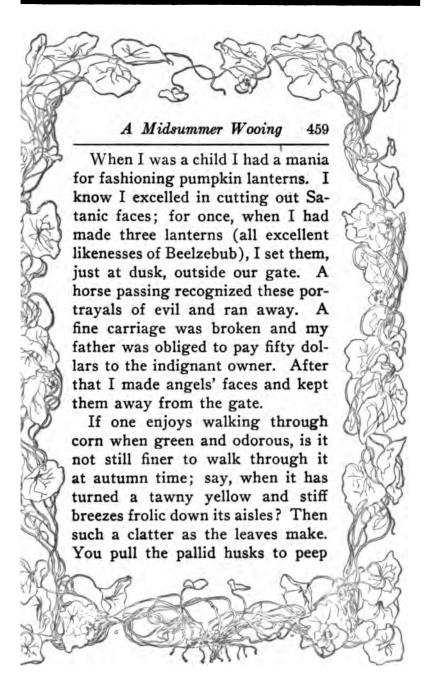


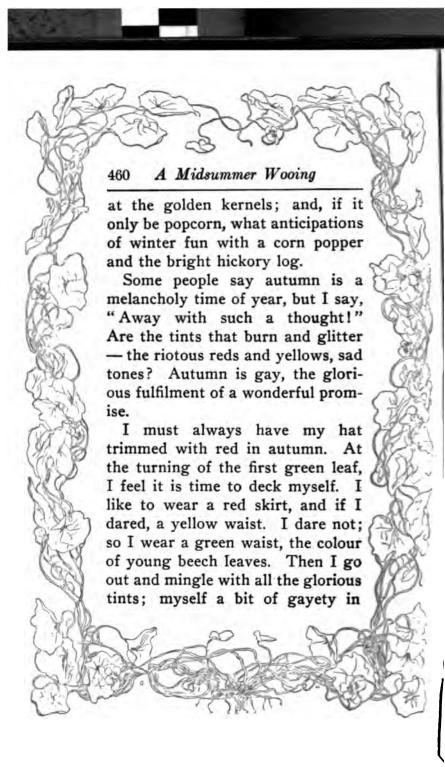


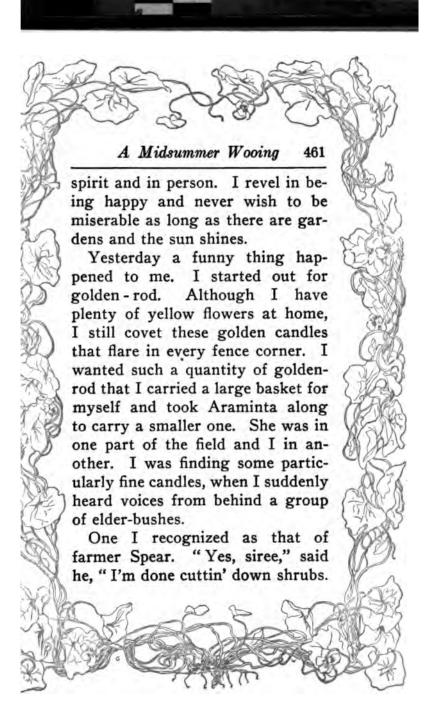


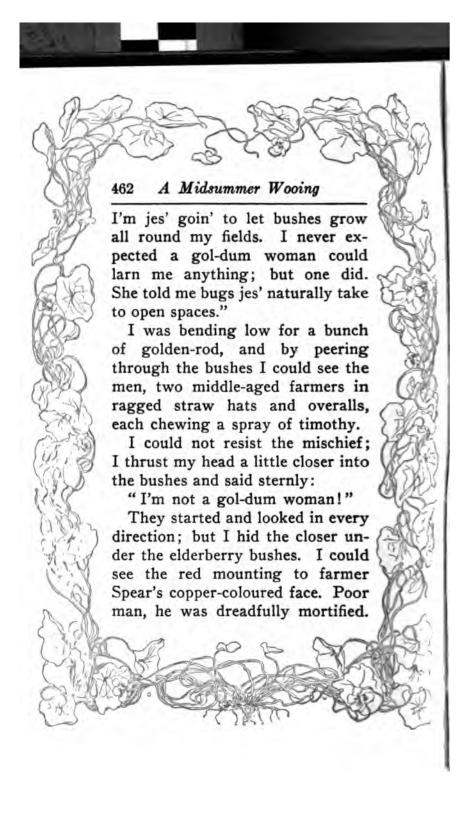


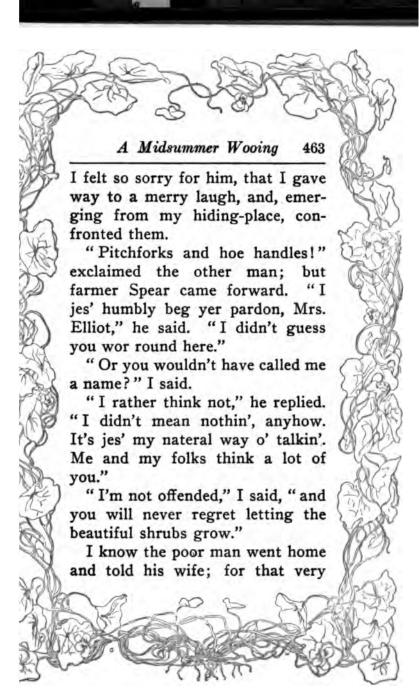


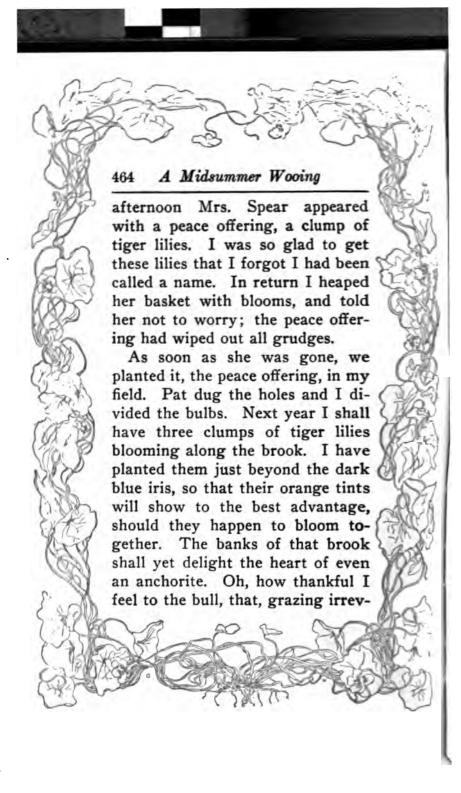


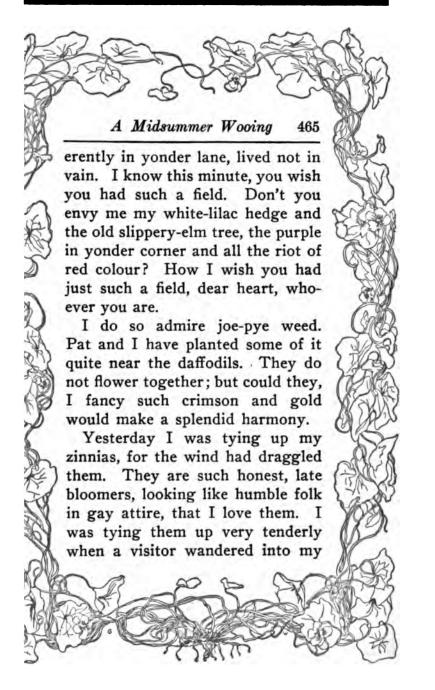


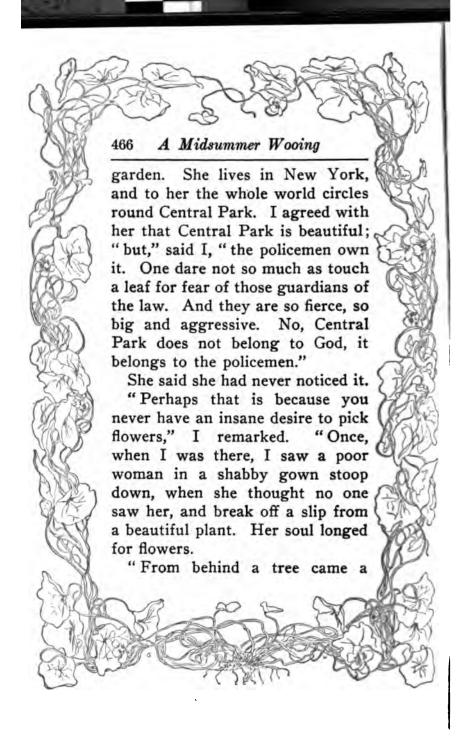


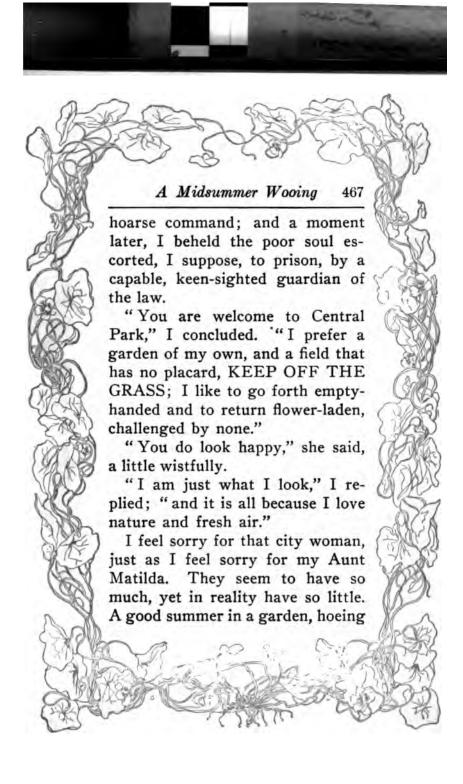


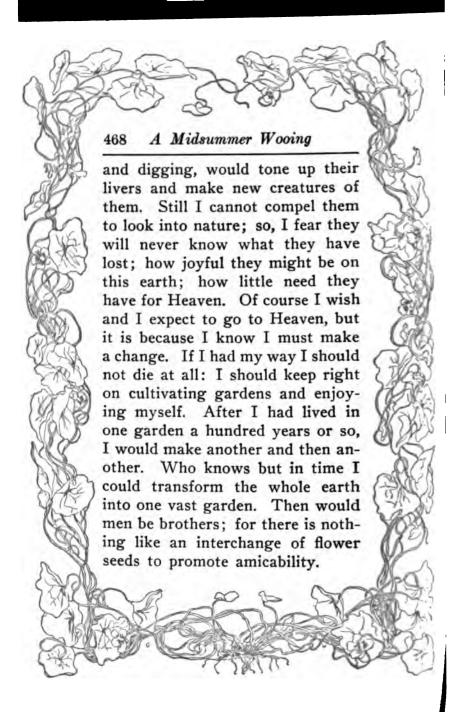


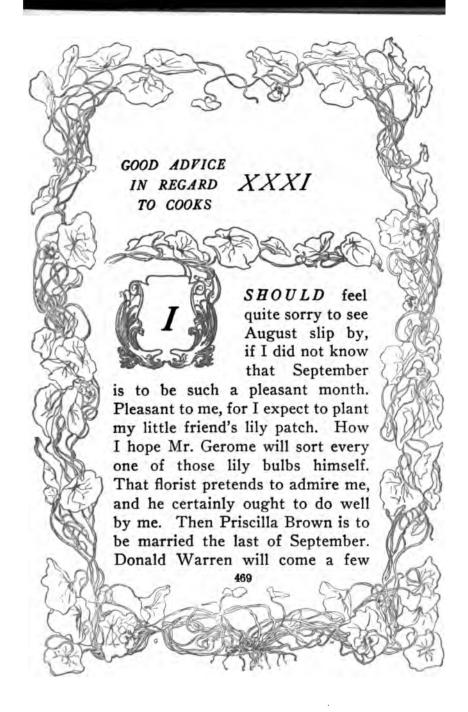


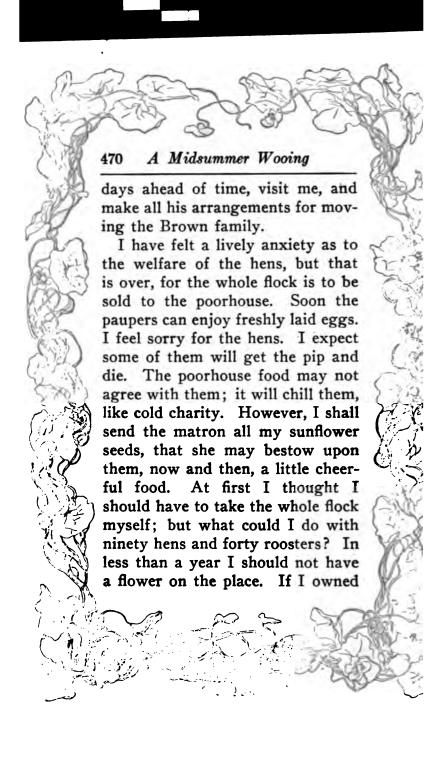


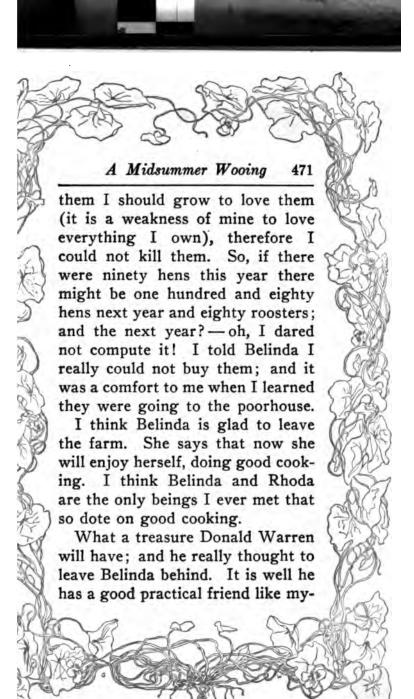


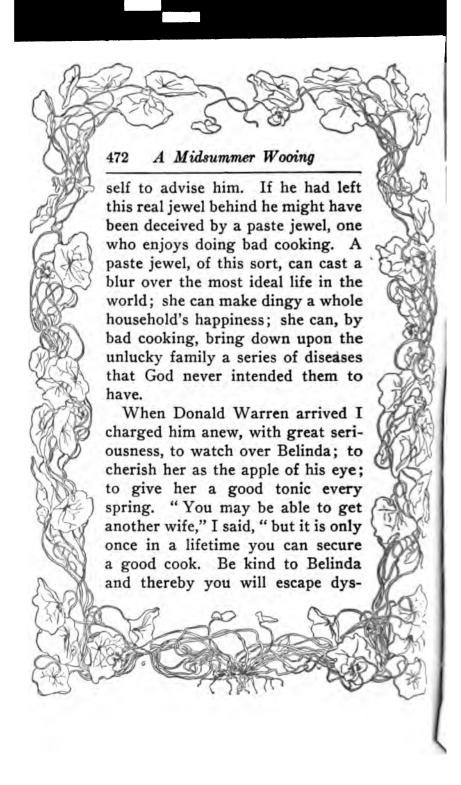


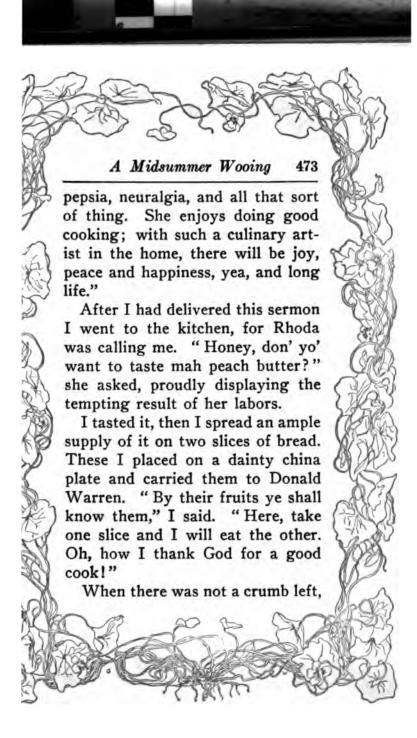


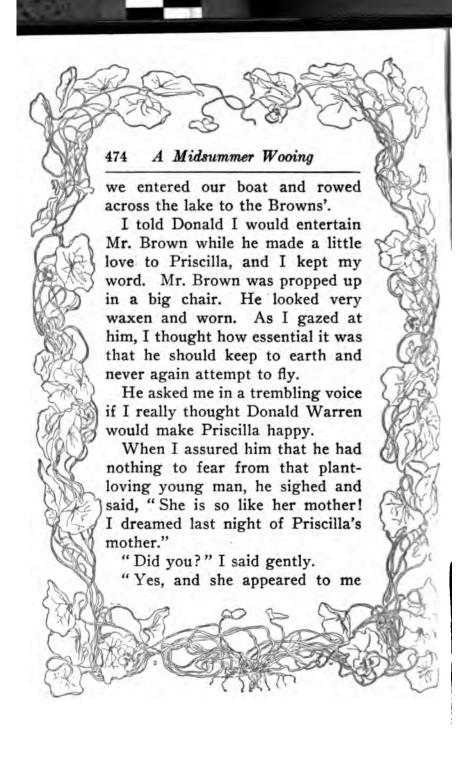


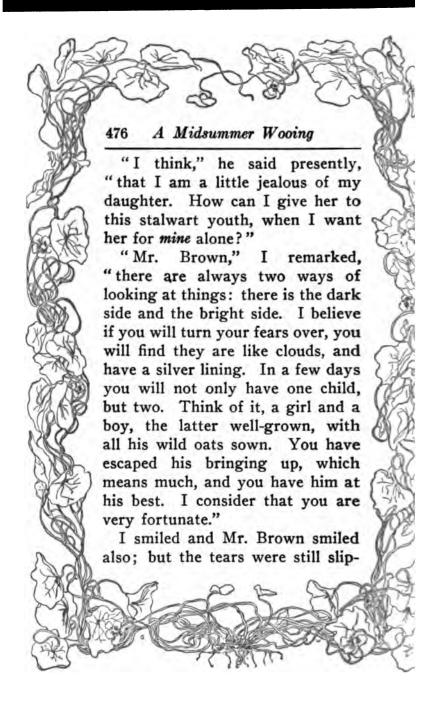


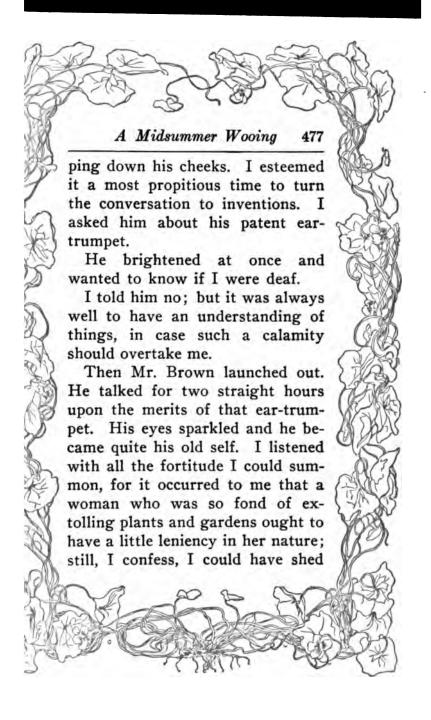


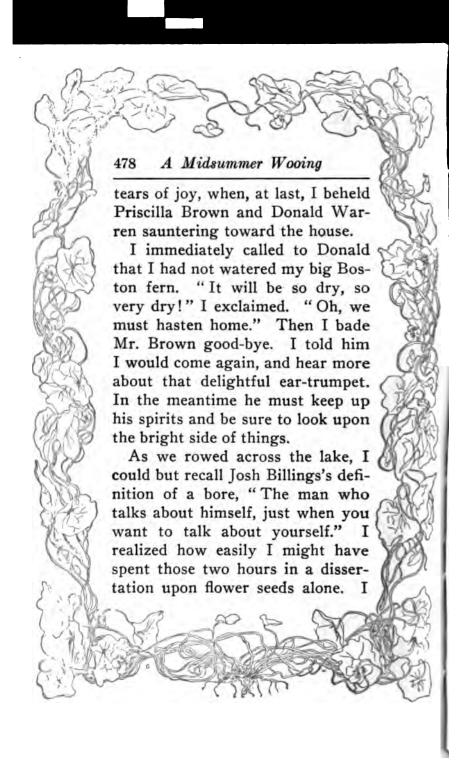


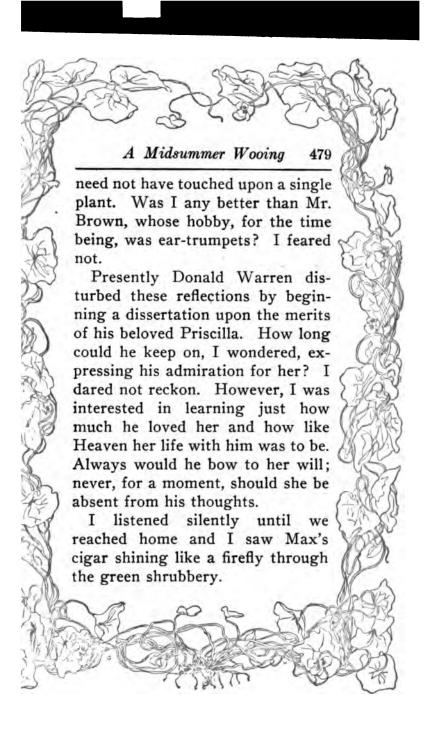




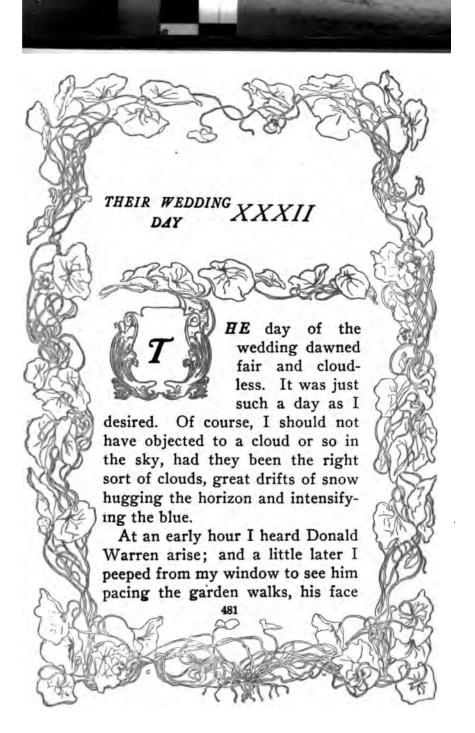


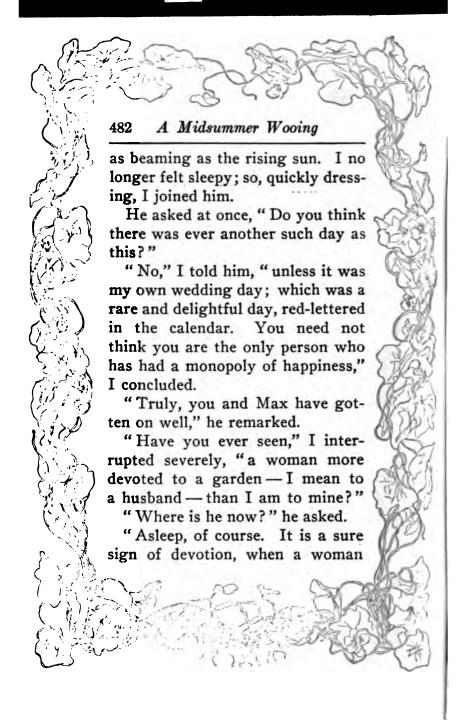


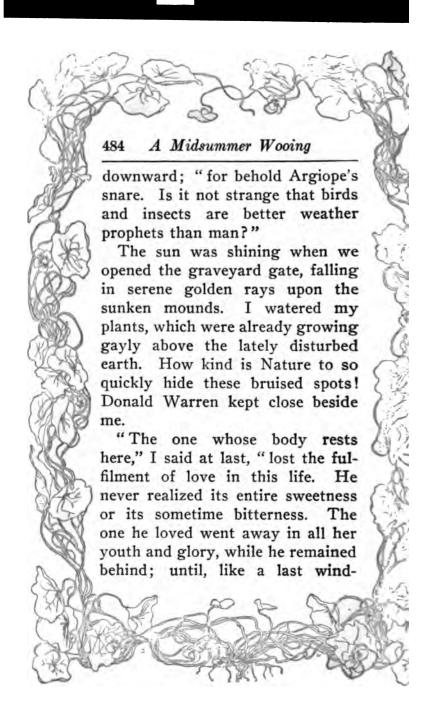




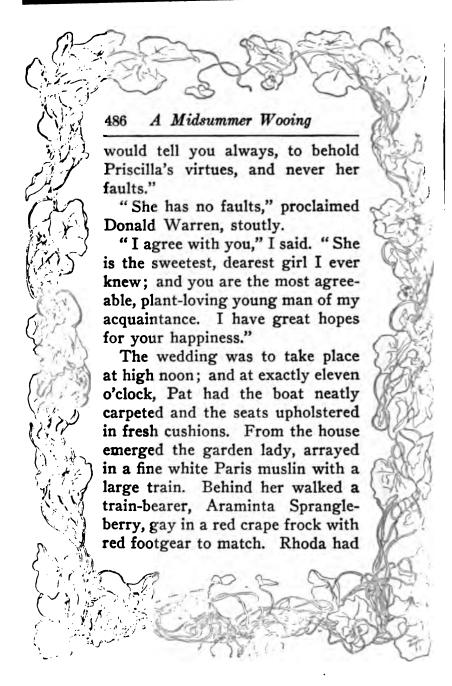


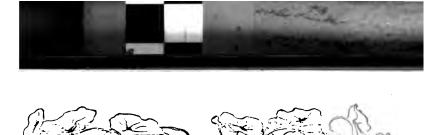






blown leaf, he succumbed to nature, falling asleep in the arms of Death. He said once that he was glad she went away, this little sweetheart, because, now, he could meet her again with their love untarnished; not spoiled by petty misunderstandings or hurt by harsh words. his life he had kept the thought of her in his heart; and from that thought sprang the sweetest, noblest character I have ever known. He was always happy, my dear old friend! He believed in the goodness and happiness of this earth, and in the goodness and happiness of the world to come. He would counsel you to-day not to wed Priscilla Brown for this life only, but for the life to come. He would bid you to be happy here that you may be still happier over there. He



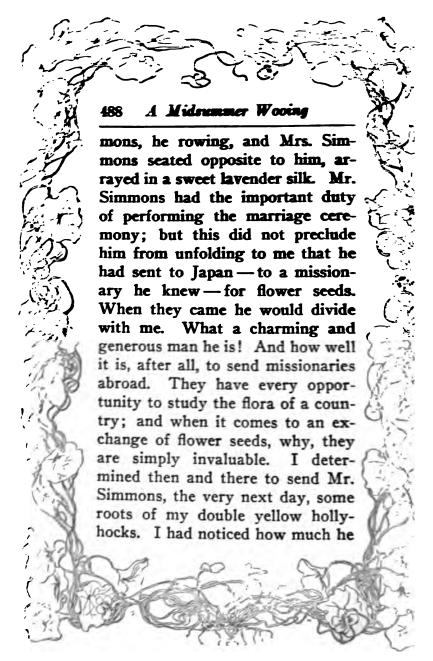


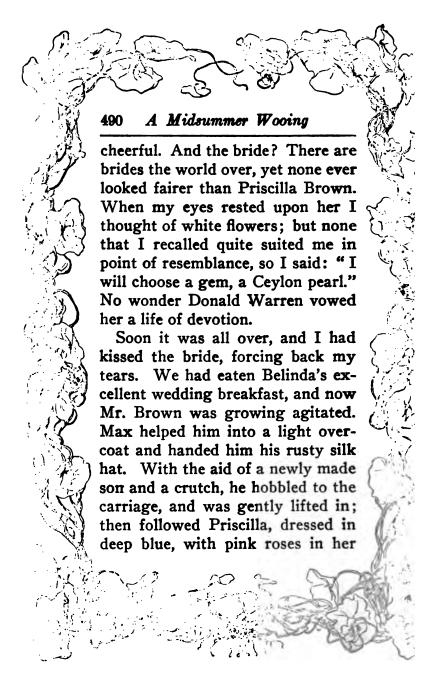
A Midsummer Wooing

brushed out her pigtails until the piquant little face was surrounded with a soft cloud of kinky blackness. Araminta looked like some strange tropical blossom, or, as I thought later, like one of our American products, a piece of rookwood. She tossed her head in a lofty manner and bore my train as if I were the one lady in the land. I took my seat in the stern of the boat, and Max handed me my precious bouquet of pink tea roses. Araminta squeezed in beside me. Donald Warren and Max occupied the middle seat and Pat was at the oars. Rhoda watched us depart, her white teeth gleaming in a delighted smile

We rowed down our little river and across the shining lake. Halfway, we overtook the Rev. Mr. Sim-

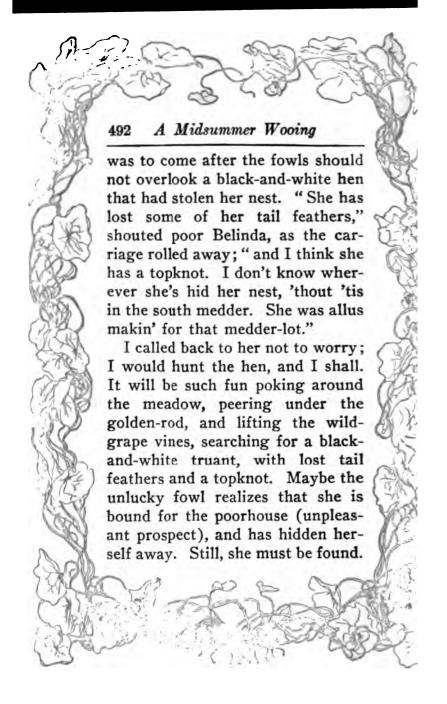
of genuine good-will.





hat. It was a modern costume, but it became her no better than the quaint old gowns belonging to mamma of histrionic fame. She took the vacant place beside her father and the bridegroom sat opposite. It seemed a little cruel that Donald Warren could not sit beside his bride; but, I reflected, "He can gaze into her eyes, and that will suffice."

At last came Belinda, very red in the face from over-exertion. She wore her black silk "mantilly" and a bonnet that would shame a flower garden. She carried numerous bandboxes and bundles and climbed up beside the driver. Belinda has no modern notions as to the rights of cooks. I was the last one she looked upon. As she said farewell, she bade me see that the man who



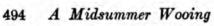
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If left out, she might starve or the foxes eat her.

I sigh a little as I gaze at the

empty house; empty, for all save Mrs. Sullivan, who upon this festive occasion has volunteered to "rid up things." She will stay until night, then lock fast and strong and bring the keys to me.

It is all over, the dear little romance in which I played so creditable a part. But for me there would have been no wedding; and but for the violets. To be sure, these plants cost something; then they refused to bloom, and the tending of them gave poor Belinda the lumbago. Some people would have sighed and said, "What a failure!" To such, life is always a failure, but I waited and hoped and prayed; I helped things along judiciously, for



one cannot go too fast at matchmaking; and lo, the result. Even that kind old uncle out in California contributed his share to the general happiness. To be sure, he died to do it; but then he was ninety, and no doubt well prepared for another world. It looks as if it were all predestined; and *I* made the instrument to bring it about. As there was no one else to praise me, I said to myself: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant!"

Silently, and a little sadly, we walked down the path to the lake. I watched Mr. and Mrs. Simmons embark; and in parting said truthfully that I hoped nothing would happen to that missionary before he sent us the flower seeds. There are so many uprisings in foreign countries that one never feels safe.



A Midsummer Wooing

Then I turned to my trainbearer, "Araminta," I said, "you may walk home; but if you get a spot on your red shoes you need not expect to attend another wedding." I dismissed Pat; for oh, I so wanted to be alone with Max. He is such a comforter.

We rowed out on the quiet lake. What a serene and joyful afternoon; not a cloud in the sky, and over yonder in the fields the indefatigable little song sparrows singing as merrily as if it were April. I love a song sparrow, because he is so chipper and hard to discourage.

Presently my husband let the boat drift. He looked at me and inquired a trifle quizzically: "What's the matter, Mistress Greenslip?"

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I dipped one hand in the water and let the shining drops run to sink into the blue again. "Nothing," I said bravely; "I was only thinking how I shall miss Priscilla; but Donald Warren has promised that they shall all return next summer."

When we reached our landing Max helped me out, then caught me to his heart.

"You're not going to pine, little Judith?" he said.

"Pine!" I exclaimed, "with the garden and you left to comfort me. What more could one ask?"

"Nothing more," replied Max.

THE END.

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